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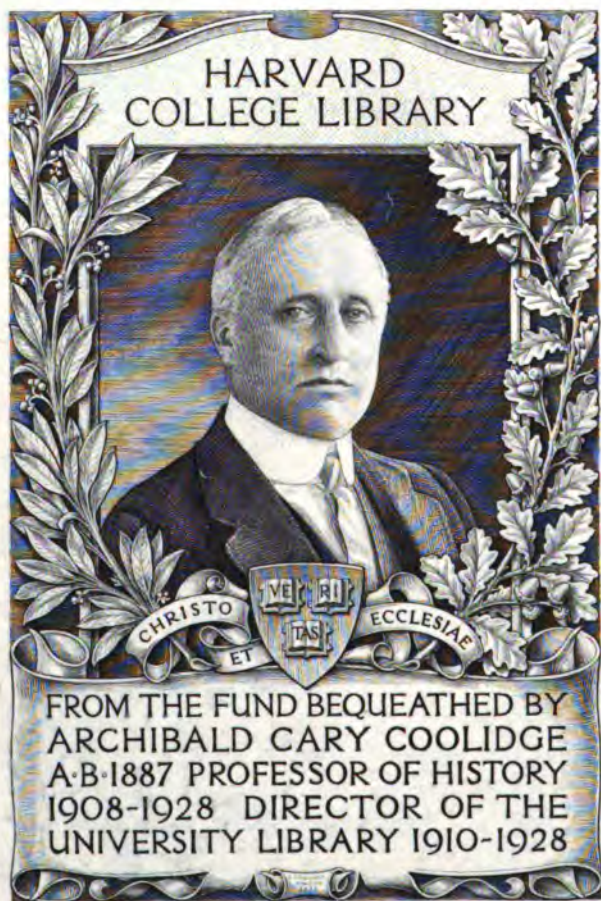
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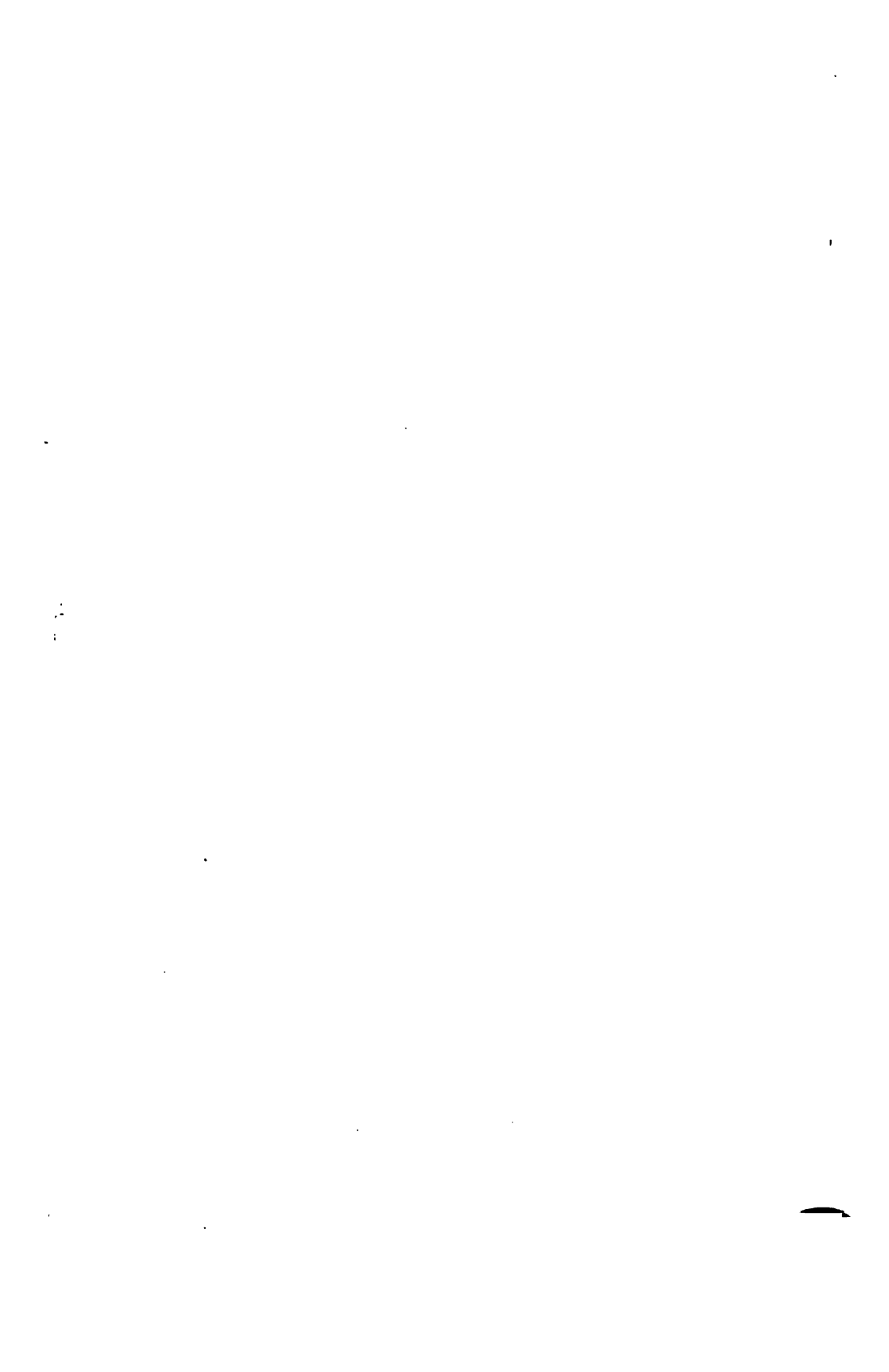
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HISTORICAL ESSAYS.

BY

JOHN COLEMAN.

"Concerning the materials of sedition. It is a thing well to be considered; for the surest way to prevent seditions, (if the times do bear it) is to take away the matter of them; for if there be but fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire."

"It is good, therefore, that men in their innovations should follow the example of time itself, which indeed innovateth greatly, but quietly, and by degrees scarce to be perceived. It is good also not to try experiments in states, except the necessity be urgent, or the utility evident; and well to beware that it be the reformation that draweth on the change, and not the desire of change that pretendeth the reformation. And, lastly, that the novelty, though it be not rejected, yet be held for a suspect; and as the Scripture saith, 'That we make a stand upon the ancient way, and then look about us, and discover what is the straight and right way, and so to walk in it.'"

BACON.

London:

THOMAS HATCHARD, 187, PICCADILLY.

1851.

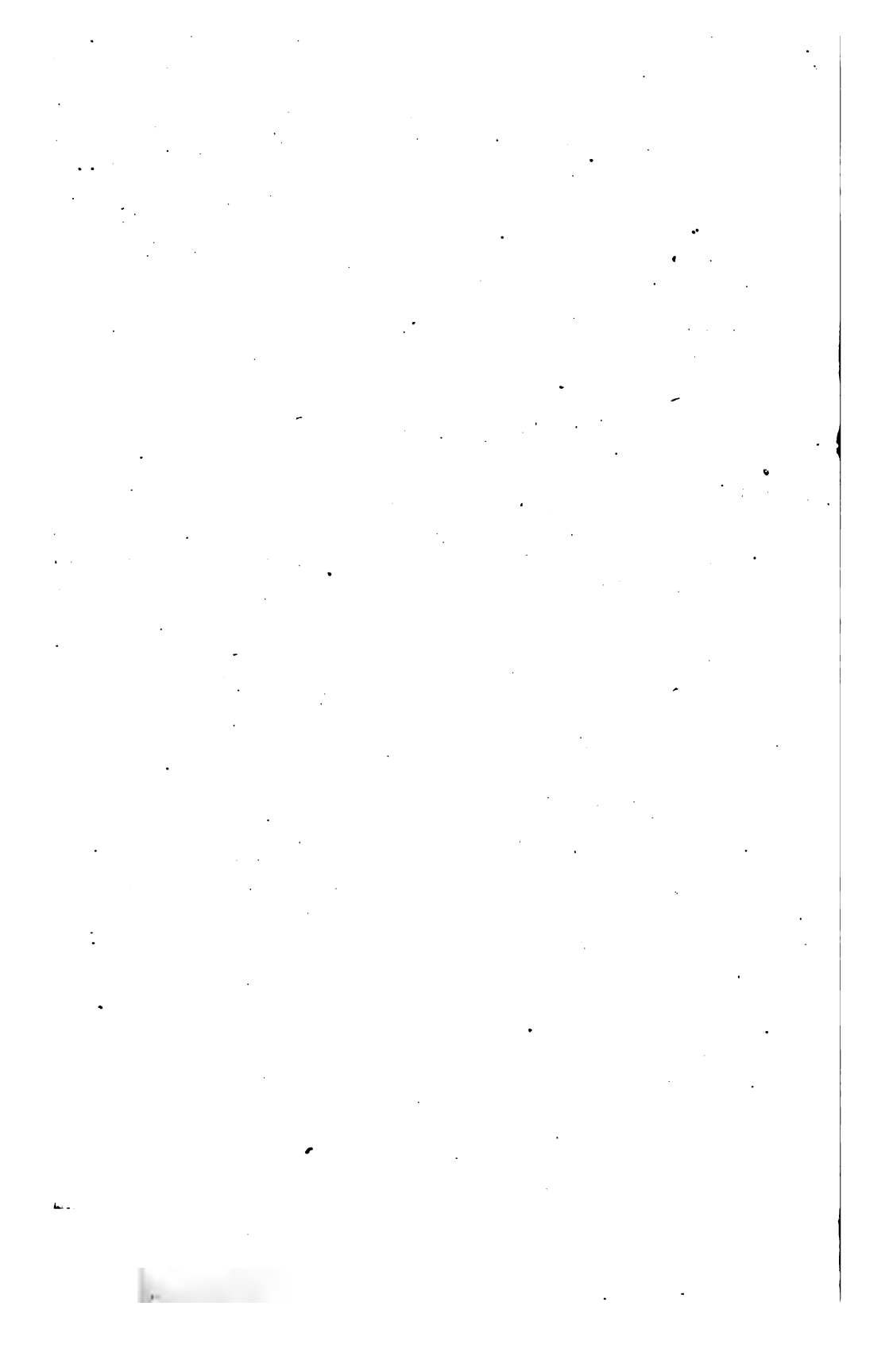
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G. H. Smith

"It is a beautiful mark of a healthy and right understanding when a man is serious and attentive to all great questions, when he is with modesty and attention adding gradually to his conviction and knowledge on such topics; not repulsed by his own previous mistakes, not disgusted by the mistakes of others, but, in spite of violence and error, believing that there is somewhere or other moderation and truth—and that to seek that truth with diligence, with seriousness, and with constancy, is one of the highest and best objects for which a man can live. Well and happily has he conducted his understanding who has learnt to derive from the exercise of it regular occupation and rational delight; who after having overcome the first pain of application, and acquired a habit of looking inwardly upon his own mind, perceives that every day is multiplying the relations, confirming the accuracy, and augmenting the number of his ideas; who feels that he is rising in the scale of intellectual beings, gathering new strength with every difficulty which he subdues, and enjoying to-day as his pleasure that which yesterday he laboured at as a toil. There are many consolations in the mind of such a man which no common life can ever afford; and many enjoyments which it has not to give!"—*Rev. Sydney Smith's Essays.*



P R E F A C E.

As the current of French politics is perpetually varying in its direction, it is necessary to inform the reader that the essay upon Socialism in this volume should be dated, May, 1850 ; for unless this mark were appended, many of the circumstances there referred to as being of recent occurrence, would as such appear unintelligible. A twelvemonth's farther experience of the present chaotic state of political government, which the French people seem now hopelessly condemned to endure, has only served to add stronger testimony to the fact, that the Revolution which displaced the Orleans dynasty, destroyed an efficient and practically free political constitution, only to substitute a miserable counterfeit that perpetuates all the evils of the deposed government, without preserving scarce any one of its virtues. Whatever might have been the errors of 'the inflexible policy,' which Louis Philippe is represented as having pursued during his reign, France, it is certain, has never been able to regain that general prosperity, either in her trade, her agriculture, or her finances, which she enjoyed under his able rule. At the present time, this is confessedly admitted by parties of every shade in French politics, and we have only to quote a

single extract from the Paris correspondent of the *Times* newspaper, to show that the commerce and credit of the French nation present dismal appearances of uncertainty and instability, that ill serve to realise those splendid anticipations of prosperity, which the agents of political sedition were always promising while they were engaged in sapping and undermining the foundations of the monarchy—

Paris, April 1st, 1851.

“Commercial men here are beginning to regard the present position of affairs with dismay, nor is it extraordinary that it should be so, when they consider the last account published by the Bank of France, which shows that the commercial bills in the portfolios of that establishment have diminished to the insignificant amount of 47,403,568*f.*, while the unemployed capital in its cellars has increased to 390,000*f.* These figures prove that commercial credit has not been at so low an ebb since the revolution of February, and can only be accounted for by the apprehension created by the approaching period for the revision of the Constitution, and the uncertainty which prevails with respect to the course the Legislature may adopt on that question. The manufacturers in the mean time are receiving but few orders, and the number of unemployed operatives is every day increasing. At Lyons, St. Etienne, and Nîmes, the silk manufacturers are nearly idle. The linen trade is in a state of stagnation, and the timber trade, which was comparatively prosperous a month since, is now suffering like the others. The accounts from the agricultural districts show a tendency to a further decline in the price of grain in the various markets.”

The national credit, which generally serves as a tolerable test of the condition of a people, speaks equally unfavourably of the results produced by the Revolution. Thus,

In January, 1848,	the 5 per cents stood at	118 <i>f.</i>
In April, 1851,	„ stand at	93 <i>f.</i>
In January, 1848,	the 3 per cents stood at	78 <i>f.</i>
In April, 1851,	„ stand at	55 <i>f.</i>

The published accounts of the Bank of France disclose how significantly the trading transactions of the French people have been influenced by the conversion of the Monarchy into a Republic. Thus,

In January, 1848,	{ Commercial bills were dis-	156,614,000f.
In April, 1851,	{ counted to the amount of }	47,403,000f.

The indirect taxes and revenues are materially diminished in amount, although the expenditure of the state shows no corresponding decrease. Thus,

In 1847, the revenue returned 820,643,000f.

In 1850, " 738,242,000f.

Some deductions, it is true, must be allowed for remission of taxation on several articles, such as the duty upon salt, yet when these items are subtracted, the deficit still remains considerable.

Neither has the legislative business of the nation been conducted with better success by an Assembly elected upon the basis of a more expanded suffrage, than by the Chamber of Deputies, as constituted under the Monarchy of 1830; for every impartial observer must admit, that in point of practical legislation, the latter has left indisputable proofs of statesmanlike ability, which its successors have hitherto been unable to vie with, much less to surpass. As to the stability of the present form of government in France, no one seems to think much about that—for the question on every Frenchman's lips is, when will be the proper time to overthrow it, and in what manner shall the blow be struck? Conceive the prospects of a nation, in which one of its most profound statesmen is obliged to ask such a series of questions as these: "Can the Republic be re-established? Can the Monarchy

be restored? Which Monarchy—the Empire, or the House of Bourbon? What branch of the House of Bourbon—the elder, or the younger, or both together and in concert?” Neither does the present constitution work with any degree of regularity or efficiency. The executive and the legislative powers of the government are constantly at variance with one another; and instead of attempting to act in harmonious co-operation, each is perpetually on the watch to crush its rival and exclaim, *l'état c'est moi*. Even the Assembly itself is so harassed and divided by turbulent and conflicting factions, that the President has been recently compelled to announce, that ‘all the ministerial combinations he had endeavoured to realise have definitively broken down.’ In truth, the time has at length arrived when even those persons who were the most eager to create the Republic, have begun to feel the bitterness of that dignified but prophetic language, which the Queen of Louis Philippe is reported to have used when the King’s abdication was finally yielded—“*Vous l'avez—vous vous en repentirez.*”

Of the character and virtues of Louis Philippe this is not the place to speak, but we cannot refrain from noticing the ingratitude of that people to whose service the declining years of his life were almost wholly dedicated. In point of ability, he was not unworthy to be ranked with some of the greatest of French Monarchs, with Henry IV., Louis XIV., or Napoleon, for though he occupied a less conspicuous field, his actions were not less meritorious than theirs. It certainly is not to the credit of France that such a man should

have been driven from her shores, with circumstances of contempt that the meanest criminal could hardly have deserved. It has been said that he was ambitious, selfish, and tyrannical, but these are accusations much more easily advanced than substantiated. With greater truth it might be said, that he was too much inclined to clemency and mercy for the age in which he lived, and too little disposed to exercise that extreme authority which the necessities of the times required. If he had had a worse heart, he might have died King of the French, but he preferred the obscurity of exile to that tenure of power which is only preserved and maintained by the constant presence of military force. How far he was justified in laying down the sword, it will be for History to decide, but he had at least that consolation, which Pericles upon his death-bed was proud of, concerning his citizens, "that no Frenchman had ever worn a mourning gown through his occasion."

"Now what relief can righteous David bring?

How fatal 'tis to be too good a King,

Friends, he has few, so high the madness grows,

Who dare be such, must be the people's foes."

Of all the great political changes that at various epochs have convulsed modern Europe, we cannot point to one which has borne within it such scanty germs of improvement for the future, or which has removed so few evils of the past, as the Revolution of February, for whatever might have been the calamities and vicissitudes that followed the Great Rebellion in England, or the Reign of Terror in France, those events undoubtedly swept away many corruptions and abuses which scarce anything but such violent and

terrible remedies could have accomplished. The changes of the last three years in France have, on the contrary, embarrassed the nation with all the disorders consequent upon political tumult, without having, in scarcely a single instance, conferred any one advantage that half compensates the losses which have been sustained in acquiring it. Indeed, it is difficult to regard the fall of Constitutional Monarchy in France in any other light than as one of the most disastrous calamities that ever happened to that nation; and we fear that when after the lapse of ages, the future historian shall be engaged in tracing the decline and fall of French civilisation, amidst the solitudes of her deserted palaces and the broken ruins of her once stately and magnificent cities, he will point through centuries to this fatal Revolution, and exclaim in the language of the Roman poet,

“Hoc fonte derivata clades
In patriam, populum que fluxit.”

April 16th, 1851.

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HISTORICAL FRAGMENTS.

I. ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OF 1789.

II. ON THE MEROVINGIAN KINGS OF FRANCE.

FRENCH SOCIALISM.

NAPOLÉON, in one of his familiar conversations with Bourrienne, observed, "A revolution in France is a revolution in Europe"—a remark abundantly verified by recent events. The truth of this proposition being incontestably established by experience, all political changes in France, however trivial they may at first appear, are invested with a certain degree of interest and importance.

In almost every European state, but more especially in France, doctrines have latterly been freely promulgated, advising the dissolution of the present laws that hold together the social compact, and purposing to re-construct them upon entirely novel principles. This proposed reform is termed Communism, and the disciples of the school are familiarly known as the Socialists. "Liberty, equality, and fraternity," the motto adopted by these visionary enthusiasts, describes with remarkable brevity the anticipated reward of their labours; and as the school is almost wholly recruited from the needy and dissolute classes of society, the three words may be translated into plain English, as "Everything to gain, having nothing to lose." For liberty, we may read—an abolition of all law; for equality—a spoliation of the rich; for fraternity—any brotherly association to perform these highly commendable purposes. The supporters of this miserable scheme for the regeneration of society, are composed of three classes—a few speculative

philanthropists, who are foolish enough to believe they have discovered the philosopher's stone, for removing evil from the world, and converting it into a boundless Arcadia; a number of well-intentioned *ouvriers*, who embrace the views of the school without either perceiving the dangers of its pernicious principles, or being able to detect its fallacious sophisms; and the whole of that worthless part of the community, who from indolence or crime are unable to compete with the more honest and industrious citizens of the state.

Upon the present occasion we shall limit our observations to the Communists of France. Socialism, at its origin in that country, commenced by professing not to interfere with, or take any interest in the political affairs of the state; but its success was so entirely dependent upon some fundamental change being effected in the nature of the government, that this mask became at length laid aside. As obedience is always more or less synonymous with the idea of a monarchy, and as this virtue is wholly at variance with the cardinal points of Socialism, nothing appeared more certain than that such a form of government must be got rid of, before the least prospect of success could be entertained for the new opinions. A Republic offered every advantage for the propagation of the Socialist doctrines, as under that most indefinite term any schemes, however monstrous, might be set in action without appearing to be inconsistent. Hence, the Socialist was virtually if not ostensibly a Republican from his cradle.

Upon the occurrence of the Revolution of 1830,

the French Communists were very limited and insignificant in point of number; and as they strictly preserved the visionary theories of their philosophical conceptions free from all contact with the political controversies then pending, their existence was scarcely recognised amidst the turbulent changes which raised the Orleans dynasty to power. Saint Simon, an enthusiast, was the leader and acknowledged founder of the school; but at this period both he and his disciples appeared doomed to that garret kind of obscurity which is the usual fate of philosophers. In those glorious days which placed Louis Philippe upon a throne, and converted him into a Citizen King, the Republican party were far more numerous and better organized than the generality of politicians suspected; but, conceiving "the pear not ripe," their banners were never very conspicuously displayed upon the barricades of July. Scarcely, however, had the new dynasty been congratulated upon its successful elevation to power, than the Republican party issued forth into the streets with an armed force to dispute the validity of the Charter. Several *coups de main*, attempted both in Paris and Lyons, were not suppressed by the government without considerable difficulty and loss of life. Lyons, more than once, required placing in a state of siege; and the massacre of the Cloitre de St. Mery showed the determined character of the new opponents with which the Bourgeois monarchy had to contend.

In spite of plots, of attempted assassinations, and infernal machines, the royalty of the Hotel de Ville

flourished, and seemed to be striking its roots deeply into the national heart. The Republicans dispirited and disheartened by the failure of their various insurrections retired from the streets, and ceased for a time, to annoy the government openly; but, although no longer visible, their party was by no means finally broken up, nor their future hopes destroyed—"The snake was scotched, not killed." In 1840, the ministry of M. Guizot accepted office, and every succeeding session appeared to strengthen his position by reducing the number of his antagonists—the liberal, or dynastic opposition, as it was termed, declining almost in exact proportion to the length of time this distinguished minister held the reins of power. So insignificant and so impotent did the *Cotè Gauche* at length become, that its existence almost ceased to excite any interest; and that ardour, which is usually expended upon attempting to place the opposition in the seats of office, was transferred to organize a new party, springing up without the walls of the Chamber. Notwithstanding this accession of strength, the prospects of the Republicans were anything but promising; and whatever expectations they might raise respecting the future, one might venture to say none of them imagined the fall of the Orleans dynasty would occur before the death of its founder. Amidst that apparent apathy which prevailed over the French political world in 1847, the Republican party could not be said to have taken possession of society, or to have materially increased in importance. On the contrary, in the summer of that year they were evidently in the shade,

and no one would have dreamed that they were only six months from a final and complete triumph ; or that at the expiration of that period, the chariot wheels of the Republican chiefs would be passing over the ruins of the monarchy. The prominent leaders of the party, however, soon perceived that before any permanent or continuous support could be derived from the people, some great and fundamental principle must be enunciated, having for its object advantages more alluring than the mere attainment of political power. Socialism, hitherto obscured, appeared upon the scene to claim their attention ; they embraced the offer, and applied the influence of its doctrines to transfuse popular enthusiasm into the Republican cause. Thus identified and interwoven, Socialism and Republicanism soon became one and indivisible.

No one, however courageous, however gifted, or however eloquent, can long retain command over the masses of mankind for the prosecution of a great design, unless he can impress upon them the principle for which he has assumed to be their leader, and by which they have been attracted to become his followers. As Robespierre asserted the natural innocence of man to be the guiding star of the philosophy he attempted to inculcate, so our modern revolutionists have declared the natural equality of man to be the beacon which directs their perilous course ; and to that superstitious and fanatical faith, by which the multitude are intoxicated into the belief that boundless benefits will spring forth from these deceitful theories, we must equally turn, whether we seek the cause

which enabled Robespierre to practise his remorseless barbarities upon the scaffold, or whether we seek a reason for the savage atrocities of the barricades, under the sway of Barbes. In the one instance, as in the other, it was the deep conviction the multitude had of the rectitude of the principle they had embraced, although that principle was in reality founded upon error which conferred such a mighty influence upon agencies otherwise contemptible and insignificant.

The refusal of the government to grant reform ; the infatuation under which the people laboured respecting Socialism ; the scarcity of provisions, combined with deficient employment for the poor ; the apathy shown by the national guard, as well as by all political parties towards the reigning dynasty ; and the want of energy and determination displayed by the king ; all concurred to produce one of those extraordinary political convulsions, for which Paris seems so peculiarly destined to be the theatre. A few days sufficed to change the capital from a state of perfect order, into a scene of anarchical tumult, worthy of the times in which Etienne Marcel and Robert le Coq figured at the head of their rebellious companions. Voltaire remarked, that when the political passions of the French people were once excited, the merest accident might convert a simple street quarrel into a serious revolution ; and it cannot be doubted, but that the unfortunate volley fired upon the mob, by the regiment in the Rue de Capucines, had a great share in terminating the Three Days of February with so fatal a

catastrophe as the fall of the monarchy. The changes of the Revolution were almost as rapid and complete as those of a pantomime. One night Louis Philippe sat consulting with his council of ministers in the *salons* of the Tuilleries; the next, Monsieur Albert was presiding over his select committee of *ouvriers*, seated like so many Oriental Muftis upon the velvet cushions of the Luxembourg. It was much the same as if Guy Fawkes had succeeded in blowing up James the First with his parliament, and called his fellow-conspirators to a council at Whitehall. The Three Days of February, 1848, were equivalent in the work of destruction to the three years required in 1789, to batter down the original fortress of the monarchy. If Mr. Burke, in his day, called the members of the Constituent Assembly "the best architects of ruin the world ever saw," what would he have thought of the Communists and the Democrats of the nineteenth century, who included the 23rd of June and the 10th of August, for the royalty of Louis Philippe, in a single week. For destroying constitutions or subverting governments, there is no one equal to a poet who has turned legislator, and, instead of making good verses, employs himself in making bad laws. As Frederick the Great used to say, "If you want to ruin a province, set a philosopher to govern it"—the French people will at last discover that it is better to put their trust in princes than in poets. The Revolution having placed the Republicans and Socialists in power, their leaders, under that most desperate of expedients a "Provincial Government," presided over,

what may be termed for want of a better designation, a chronic anarchy. Frenchmen having heard and read much about liberty, began now to enjoy it. Having planted the tree, they began to taste the fruit. As to the provinces, they hardly knew what the Revolution meant, until the commissaries of M. Ledru Rollin paid them a visit. These gentlemen were invested with that moderated kind of authority, termed "full powers." "Quels sont vos pouvoirs? Ils sont illimités. Pour l'accomplissement de votre tâche vous êtes investis de la souveraineté du peuple:" thus instructed in their functions, the commissaries commenced a pecuniary Reign of Terror, in which the victims lost their money instead of their heads. The first operations of these provincial pro-consuls were conducted upon true Socialist principles; they ordered bankers not to remit any deposits which might be demanded; and they decreed that no one should leave a town with more than 500 francs in his possession. Capitalists were to contribute an additional tax, the amount of which was to be levied by a jury of Socialists. Every arrow taken out of the Socialist quiver, was directed against the capitalist, who became at length convinced that he was making very little progress towards liberty, but very rapid progress towards equality. Defeated in the Constituent Assembly, and perceiving that the power of the sovereign people was passing out of their hands, the Socialists made a bold struggle to regain the mastery upon the barricades of June; but under the threatening approach of a general pillage, the army, the bourgeoisie, and the national

guard, combined to perform that act of repression, which, had it been vigorously exercised in February, would have preserved the monarchy. Although several abortive conspiracies have since been attempted by the party of the *bonnet rouge*, no greater success has attended the efforts of these Sans Culottes, than the preparation of a written paper constitution, ready to be put in practice, if their pikes should ever prove victorious. The *deux heures de pillage* of Barbes, would, however, probably simplify the more tedious methods of confiscation, proposed by the Socialist philosophers, if the red flag should ever wave from the Hotel de Ville. Latterly, the Socialists have been gradually losing ground: with several of their most influential leaders in exile, and the great mass of the French population better informed by experiencing the evils of the experiment, we are willing to hope that, for the present, at least, Communism is not likely to regain the ascendancy.

Socialism in France being intrinsically nothing more or less than a specific declaration of war, made by the lower against the upper classes of society, it becomes a question whether the conduct of the higher orders towards their inferiors has been in any degree culpable or reprehensible; whether the latter can prove or establish against the former any just grounds of complaint. The poorer classes might reasonably enough object to the disproportionate manner in which they were taxed by the state, for the maintenance of the public revenue—heavy duties being imposed upon tobacco and salt, two of their principal necessities.

Comparing the amount of taxation levied from those who obtained their livelihood directly by industry, with that required of those who derived their income from vested capital, the heaviest part of the burden, it must be confessed, fell upon the working classes of the community; an inequality which should have been particularly guarded against, in a state where the privilege of exercising political power was exclusively and rigidly limited to those persons only, who could claim it by coming within the bounds of a high property qualification. The annual payment of 200 francs, by direct taxation, being required to constitute an elector, the elective franchise necessarily became restricted to a very small section of the people—not more than two-hundred-and-forty thousand possessing a voice in the nomination of deputies, out of a population comprising forty millions. Another accusation, which might be justly raised against the opulent classes, was the little activity they displayed in attempting to ameliorate the social condition of the poor; the philanthropy of the rich rarely extended beyond kind words, and when applied to for alms they generally referred the applicants to a government, already too much embarrassed with other difficulties to listen to such demands. We question whether the French nation have laboured a tenth-part so earnestly as the English people, in remedying and removing the social evils of the day; even M. Guizot publicly expressed in this country his regret that the prodigality of English charity should so far outstrip the parsimony evinced by his own countrymen, when they were

called upon to contribute towards the support of any benevolent institutions. Hundreds of instances might be proved in England, where families have practised the greatest self-denial to minister to the wants of the needy and infirm ; whilst in France, on the contrary, the fashionable classes have frequented the opera, the vaudeville, and the assembly, and never thought about the working classes, till the first bullet was fired, or the first barricade raised. By this selfish and heartless isolation of the rich, the population of France again became distinctly divided into two classes, whose views, habits, and feelings, were diametrically opposed. In 1789, the gulf was between the noble and the *roturier* ; in 1848, it was between the bourgeoisie, or those who possessed capital, and the people, or those who supplied labour—the chasm upon each occasion being equally wide and impassable. But the circumstance which, perhaps, of all others, had a tendency to diminish that respect due from the lower orders of society to their superiors, was the introduction of a numerous class of fortunate speculators to the highest offices and honours of the state. Nothing has so immoral an influence upon the character of a people, as the fact of their being called to witness the frequent advance of persons to political power and high social consideration, merely because such individuals have been suddenly endowed with the artificial qualification of boundless wealth, by the caprice of fortune, or some less honourable means. It was notorious, under the last dynasty in France, that even ex-Ministers had been detected in realizing prodigious sums of wealth,

by tampering with the government officials, and by tacitly conniving at the most corrupt practices; nor was the punishment inflicted upon such persons by the government, at all commensurate to their offence. And these were by no means solitary or isolated instances, for we believe there were hundreds of persons raised to influence and power in France during the last few years, who, if they could be absolved from actual fraud, had displayed no other talent but that of vulgar artifice. Nothing is more commendable than the accumulation of wealth by the honourable exercise of talent, or even by the practice of an austere self-denial; but when riches are acquired in such a manner, that the possessor has been troubled to escape with his prize through the meshes of the law, the case is widely altered. It is ridiculous to expect that the lower classes of society will quietly submit to be ruled by people, who have shown far more skill in robbing the state than in serving it. But if such were the instances of provocation on the part of the bourgeoisie, we, by no means, wish to infer, that the adoption of Socialism, by the working classes, was the proper method to resent them.

The great text of the Communist is M. Louis Blanc's work, "The Organization of Labour," a book which might, perhaps, have been much more properly termed, "The Disorganization of Labour." Written in 1839, nine years elapsed before the author enjoyed an opportunity of proving the fallaciousness of his own theories by a practical developement. M. Blanc is one of those men who would have passed off for a Solon,

or a Lyncurgus, if the French people had been all as perfect as angels; but as they show very little of the seraphic in their actions or their disposition, and as, like all other human beings, their nature partakes of the serpent as well as the dove, M. Blanc has failed to ascend the pedestal of fame. A thousand proposed decrees were prepared by M. Blanc, against his practical statesmanship should begin—never was man more confident; he thought to have left all other legislators behind him in his wondrous flight; but no sooner had he attained the giddy height of power, than, like the artist in Rasselas, “he waved his pinions a little while to gather air, then leaped from his stand, and in an instant dropped into the lake.” We believe M. Blanc to be a sincere philanthropist, but no statesman—at least not in France. His laws would be admirable to regulate a wax-work exhibition! but they wo’nt do for a people who are perpetually wanting to go one way, whenever their rulers want them to go the other.

As a member of the Provisional Government, M. Blanc may be considered to have been peculiarly the representative of Socialist opinions in that active council. Several of his colleagues were unfavourable to Communism, but as the measures proposed by the Provisionals uniformly bear the tinge of this philosophy, we may infer these gentlemen concurred in the course pursued, either from a sense of the impending difficulties of the time, or from the more humble desire “to make things pleasant.” During the interval which elapsed between the fall of the monarchy and the election of the Constituent Assembly, the experi-

ment of Socialism was fully tried in France, and condemned by every sensible observer. It would be difficult to believe half the absurdities that were then attempted, if their occurrence had not been so recent and familiar. Armed with that tremendous weapon, "the will of the sovereign people," the Provisional Government had, in two months, well nigh upset every institution in France. Whatever errors the inventors of this *impromptu* council might commit, they will never be accused of idleness. If they could only have reconstructed things half as quickly as they destroyed them, they would remain model statesmen for the rest of time. National workshops were established upon a Socialist basis; political clubs, worthy to be ranked with those of the Jacobins and Cordeliers, were opened; a Constituent Assembly was convened upon the principle of universal suffrage; workmen were regularly paid out of the public treasury, for doing nothing but perform an occasional musket demonstration; all labour was limited to ten hours a day; the system of marchandage or sub-contracts abolished; ignorance was declared by the Minister for public instruction a desirable qualification in a legislator; and the sovereign people were ordered to elect none but persons of "sure republican principles" as their representatives. Noah and his sons, when alighting from the ark, could not have begun to legislate upon a much clearer ground, than did the Constituent Assembly after the forty days' rule of the Provisionals; the inkhorns of the Hotel de Ville were quite as destructive as the waters of the deluge, and the antediluvian relics they left, almost as rare.

The philosophy of Communism proposes so many changes in the social system, and lays open such a wide field for discussion, that nothing less than a thick volume would embrace the consideration of all its doctrines and pretensions. We shall, therefore, limit our observations to five distinct points, commenting upon them *seriatim*.—1. The right of the capitalist to enjoy the benefits arising from competition, in his employment of the labourer. 2. The advantages which accrue to society at large, by the exercise of competition with reference to all kinds of labour, and the evils which would infallibly result if such a principle were abandoned. 3. How far the state should interfere in regulating the relations between the capitalist and the labourer. 4. The advantages arising from the existence of the capitalist; and his right to employ his capital when, and in what manner, he may think proper. 5. The evils which France has undergone, owing to the absence of large capitalists—a defect consequent upon that minute subdivision of property, which followed the close of the French Revolution.

I. One of the leading propositions which the Socialists assert with so much vehemence, is, that the capitalist should be bound to employ and remunerate his workmen, without any reference to their comparative ability or activity: thus, as the high-priest of Socialism expresses himself upon this point, they maintain “that he who does the most for the state, should receive the least; and he who does the least, should receive the most.” To tell an employer that he is to pay as high a wage for a man that has one arm,

as for another that has two; and that he is equally bound to hire the one as the other when they apply, is manifestly absurd. Nothing could be more unjust in practice, however philanthropic it might appear in theory. Let us suppose two manufacturers established in the same street: the one happens to be fortunate enough to obtain twenty skilful artizans, who are able and willing to work, and whose services are worth the wages enforced by the state; the other, less successful, finds himself supplied with twenty, of whom ten are rendered useless, either from infirmity or idleness. Would it not be a monstrous act of injustice for the state to say to these manufacturers, "You are bound to employ these men, and you shall each pay them the same wages." Why; the one would be making a return of fifty per cent. more upon his capital than the other. Surely, there is very little equality or liberty in this? Doubtless, many instances might be cited in England, and even in France, where the capitalist does favour to a certain extent those labourers who are less gifted in natural capacity than their fellows; yet this charitable treatment is, or ought to be, invariably regarded by the workman as a favour granted to him, not as a claim which he had a right to enforce. We can hardly conceive a more unendurable species of tyranny, than the proposed decree of the Socialist, "that the state should compel the capitalist to employ the same number of men always, and to pay each labourer a particular sum for a particular amount of work." To enforce a system so pregnant with injustice is nothing more or less than for the

state to say to the capitalist, "Here are so many workmen whom you must employ and maintain as long as your funds will admit." If such a course were adopted by the state, what could it be termed but an indirect confiscation of his property—a gradual, instead of an immediate pillage of his capital. We fully admit the justice and prudence of the principle, that assistance should be afforded even to the able-bodied workmen, when employment cannot be obtained; but this eleemosynary relief must be granted by the state upon an organized system, such as that of the English Poor Law, and not be peremptorily extorted from private individuals. If the Socialist's views upon this subject were practically carried out, every factory in France would be diverted from its original purpose to become a model poor-house, maintained at the expense of the proprietor instead of the community at large. It is severe enough to make the capitalist contribute his proportionate rate to the state for the maintenance of the idler, the drunkard, and the vagrant; but it would be an intolerable oppression if he were compelled to pay them for doing nothing, and bound to encourage their vices under his own eye, without having the power to rebuke, or the authority to reprove.

The Socialist, in denouncing what he is pleased to term, the inhuman principle of competition, advises the formation of associations among the workmen, to intimidate their employers, by striking for higher wages. To this course, which, by the way, is frequently practised in England, no solid objections can

be raised. Indeed, in particular trades, the only protection afforded to the labourer, is the option he possesses of resorting to this weapon of self-defence, and thus making the master raise the wages to a legitimate price, or, at least, putting him to great temporary inconvenience. In some occupations, where the operatives are scarcely fitted for any other handicraft but the one for which they have been peculiarly educated, the masters, by combining, might reduce the wages of labour far below the just market price. Nor is the employer in any way exposed to unfair hardships by the possibility of such associations springing up, since, if the wages he offers be fairly remunerative, the labour market will always supply him with sufficient hands, though not perhaps at first exactly adapted to his requirements. So long as the commodity of labour is left free from the interference of the state, the ebb and reflux of supply and demand will perfectly suffice to regulate its prices, without seriously prejudicing the interests either of the employed or the employer; there may be, we admit, occasional and sudden vibrations of the balance, but the principle of free and unfettered competition will always ultimately succeed in establishing a just equilibrium. Every one is familiar with the scarcity and misery consequent upon the declaration of a maximum price on articles of subsistence, in the anarchy of 1793; and similar calamities must invariably follow, wherever the executive government steps out of its legitimate province, to set a value upon labour or provisions, instead of leaving such affairs to be regulated by a wholesome system of supply and

demand, based upon the comparative wants and abilities of mankind. Intemperance and over-population appear to be indicated by all political economists, as the main source of the social evils of the day; but, surely, it is not just to visit the offences of the working classes upon the capitalist, by compelling him to pay higher wages; and thus rather encourage, than check the growing disease. Hundreds of persons, both in the middle and the lower classes of society, imagine they can, without possessing property, bring up a family and enjoy the convivialities of the ale-house; but the day for taking these liberties is assuredly gone by, and the road from the tavern to the poor-house is now remarkably shortened. Mr. Malthus never objected to marriage among the poorer classes; what he argued against, was the circumstance of people marrying without any probable means of support, without possessing the energy and perseverance necessary to bring up a family. As Mr. Mill forcibly observes, "It is conceivable the state might guarantee employment at ample wages to all who are born. But if it does this, it is bound in self-protection, and for the sake of every purpose for which government exists, to provide that no person shall be born without its consent." The French labourers cannot certainly be charged with those demoralising habits of intoxication, which disgrace and barbarize the lower orders of this country, but they are equally, if not more indolent; having wasted their time in the cabaret, they expect their employers to make up the deficiency by increasing their wages; and, stimulated by the pernicious poison

of a degraded press, they resort to the musket and the barricade, instead of returning to their less exciting, but more useful occupations at home. Socialism is the creed, the faith, and the hope of the indolent; in its sophistical fallacies and its plausible doctrines they find that apology for their profligate career, which a troubled conscience always more or less demands; in its diabolical codes they find an excuse for every vice, an authority for every crime. In fine, if this pernicious system were once completely established, and its destructive principles fairly set in action, order would vanish from the world; the worthless, the dissolute, and the very refuse of society, would indulge in the most unbridled sensualities and the most degrading vices, until they exhausted that property which the industry and perseverance of former generations had accumulated and bequeathed to be a lasting source of advantage to mankind.

II. The definite aim of the Socialist, is to accomplish the abolition of competition; for so long as this salutary principle exists, the idler and the sensualist must perpetually fall back into the rear of society, or be left behind in its onward march; hence, the unceasing efforts which the Socialist employs, to place an insuperable barrier before the advancing ranks of the industrious and the intelligent members of society. Nothing, to his eye, is so hateful, as to witness the progress of improvement, the developement of industry, the success of enterprise; laggard himself, he wishes others to be laggard also; professing charity, he is the very essence of selfishness; professing

fraternity, he is the very incarnation of a beastly egotism; he is without sympathy, without pity, without feeling; but, assuming the specious garb of an hypocritical philanthropy, he lifts the dagger of envy to strike a deadly wound at the noblest, the purest, and the most exalted passions, which dwell within and animate the human heart.

Labour, says the Socialist, is a debt which every healthy citizen owes to society; but how long would the citizen continue to pay this debt unless struck by the spur of competition; how long would he undertake his duties with the same alacrity and energy, when his reward was rendered as certain if he neglected, as if he performed them. What guarantee would there exist for his promised industry? If one generation fulfilled the required task, the next might abandon it. Every cycle produces philanthropists, who, looking only at the sunny side of human nature, pronounce the advent of the golden age to be at hand; who, blind to the evil passions of mankind, see nothing but goodness in the world; and who raise up and foster the most extravagant hopes, to end in the most bitter disappointment and despair. See, says the Socialist philosopher, the superiority of the principle of association over that of competition—make all men equal, and you will make all happy. But can anything be more transparent than this miserable sophistry. Could any doctrine like this bear to be examined for a single moment, under the broad day-light of reason and experience. It is the emulation arising from competition which distinguishes man from the lower animals of

the creation ; it is this which raises and exalts him above the brute ; it is this which prompts him to aspire to the possession of sovereignty, of rank, of property, of worldly influence, and worldly power ; it is this which animates him to excel and to surpass his fellows, in practising the virtues and the charities of life. Without it, he would be no more than the beasts of the field ; a being content with finding subsistence for the appetites and wants of the hour—with seeking gratifications for the lowest desires of nature. We know that there are men so devoted to the service of religion, so spotless of human infirmity and human passion, that their aims may be said never to rest on this world ; and who, content with the humblest necessities of life, take no part in the struggle and the turmoil which surrounds them ; but these minds are to mankind the exception, and not the rule ; a fractional portion, and not the integral mass of society. Assuredly, we should err in supposing the Socialist worthy to be compared to them—the porcelain cup must be distinguished from the rest.

Let us regard the Socialist's principle of superseding competition by association in a more material point of view ; let us examine its bearings upon the ruder mechanism of the external man. Would it tend to ameliorate the condition of the poor ? Would it in reality improve their physical welfare ? Would it facilitate their acquirement of the necessities of life ? Would the machine of labour yield products of a finer texture, because watched over by such a superintending guide ? Would the wheels of that

stupendous engine, the industrial works of a great kingdom, move the swifter, when the very power which sets them in motion was lessened? No! competition is the true patron of labour; it is this which directs ambition to the slippery paths of fame; it is this which animates and inspires industry, whilst toiling up the steep ascents to greatness and renown; it is this which calls forth energy in the peasant, skill in the artificer, genius in the philosopher. Protect, and you destroy. Emulation is the soil from whence the noblest efforts of the human mind have taken root; transplant genius from that fruitful earth, and you convert the hardy and vigorous plant into a sickly, a blighted, and a withered exotic. By the artificial gradations of society, and the consequent inequalities of social rank, a perpetual stimulus exists, to prevent mankind from falling into a state of slothful apathy and stolid indifference. Even Nature confirms the necessity of this disparity between individuals, by the different and varied qualities with which she endows them from birth. Upon some are bestowed the powers of physical strength; upon others, the gifts of intellectual acuteness.

“Order is Heaven’s first law, and, this confessed—
Some are, and must be greater than the rest.”

Society, then, as it exists at present in the most civilized nations of the world, is only constructed in consonance with the apparent designs of Providence, when some of its members are employed upon the most intellectual researches of science, and others upon the humblest labours of the forest and the field.

There must be the workmen to descend the quarry for the block, before the sculptor can bestow upon the marble its godlike and immortal shape. And what actuates society to divide and separate itself into classes, but the similarity of opinions, of habits, of tastes, in the very persons who congregate together and form distinct sections of the community, almost, we might say, from self-interest. If some take the high and others the low ground, can we censure them. Amalgamate them to-day, they divide to-morrow; it is impossible for man to legislate against the laws of nature.

And what has been the result of entrusting the people to competition, of exposing them to its hardships and vicissitudes, but one continual progression of social improvement. Compare the condition of any European state, at the present day, with that which existed a hundred years ago. Compare the material civilization of the nineteenth, with the eighteenth century. Compare the comforts, the conveniences, and the luxuries, which are now thrown into the lap of society, with the rude and imperfect contrivances to which former generations were compelled to submit. Pass in review the varied discoveries of science, the vast improvements of mechanical ingenuity, the wonderful inventions of art which have signalised and adorned the age of competition. Contrast the present condition of the workman, for whose welfare the Communists feel so much solicitude, with that which he endured half a century ago. Then he was denied almost the ordinary necessities of life,

even if he were industrious ; now, if he use the commonest exertions, not only necessities, but luxuries, comparatively speaking, are placed within his reach. Many a bourgeois tradesman in Paris lives at the present time in a style of elegance and comfort, far beyond that which a gentleman enjoyed in the days of Louis Quinze ; even the *ouvrier*, whose hard lot has met with so much commiseration, fares much better than did the peasant under the old regime. People are, however, rarely satisfied with their present condition ; there is always a grievance to be redressed, or a demand to be acceded to. They will tell you their nation is no longer what it was of old ; that decadency has begun. Everything distant looks more pleasing, than that which immediately surrounds us—the fancied scenes of the past charm our imagination with their illusory deceptions, until they mislead us to judge harshly the actual and stern realities of the present. That which is presented to us through the medium of fancy and speculation, pleases more than that which makes a direct appeal to our senses. The colours of the picture are more soft and mellow, the effect is more enchanting. Hence, persons are continually declaiming about the miserable times in which their lot is cast, and lamenting the good old times which have passed away. No one confesses that he lives in a golden age—it is always gone, or yet to come. These ideal visions of a glorious past that never existed, or of a promising future that will never arrive, are far more poetical than true. They will not bear analysis ; they melt away under the observation

of reason and experience. The France of 1848 cannot be compared to the France of 1748, without, at once, disclosing the success which competition has achieved. In the interval between these periods, her population has nearly doubled; her national wealth has multiplied; public works have increased; new manufactures have been introduced; agriculture has improved; commerce has taken a wider range. In spite of the disastrous changes in political government consequent upon successive revolutions, and of the ruinous wars which occupied the whole duration of the Imperial Regime, abundant evidence can be adduced to prove that the social prosperity of the French people has been pretty uniformly progressive and increasing. If, then, in defiance of so many obstacles, France has laboured to such good purpose, it would surely be unwise to exchange a commercial system which has conferred upon society acknowledged and palpable benefits, for a plan, which, at best, only rests its claims to notice on extravagant hopes and chimerical expectations. It will be time enough to seek the physician when the malady appears. It is the empiric only who prescribes for health.

III. There is no subject upon which at different epochs of society the opinions of mankind have been so divided, as that of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of monopoly and competition. Nor has the study of political economy, though now conducted upon more correct principles than hitherto, yet enabled either of these formidable antagonists to obtain a final and undisputed triumph. Like Hamlet and Laertes in

the sword encounter, victory sometimes appears to rest with the one, sometimes with the other. Two hundred years have left the question still undecided; and in France, statesmen may be found as eager for the cause of monopoly, as ever Colbert was; and others worthy to vie with Turgot in their zeal to establish free competition. It was the ancient policy of the European states to interfere very materially, in regulating the price of labour, and in prescribing the terms upon which labour should be hired. The guilds, or corporations of towns, in the middle ages, perhaps, offer the most perfect specimens of an injurious monopoly that can be imagined, although, in the infancy of commerce, it must be admitted, they afforded considerable assistance to the advancement of mercantile intercourse and international communication. Under certain charters granted by the state, the masters of particular trades were thus permitted to enter into combinations, and possess the exclusive privilege of supplying the locality over which their rights extended, with the articles of their manufacture. No one being at liberty to compete with these privileged merchants, the prices of their goods often became exorbitant to the highest degree; and as the government had originally received an enormous sum for making their incorporation legitimate, the people possessed no remedy but to submit quietly to the demands of these rapacious traders. Nor did the mischief end here—the rights of labour being equally disregarded and violated by the oppressive bye-laws of these trading corporations. Under the terms of apprenticeships and companionships, youths

spent the best part of their lives in a kind of degrading servitude; and as no rewards were offered to stimulate industry, or encourage toil, indolent and careless habits were naturally engendered. It is the merit of Adam Smith, that he was the first political economist who exposed the evils and defects of these gigantic monopolies, and who explained, upon sound principles, the superior advantage which would arise, if free competition were substituted in their place. Quesnay and the elder Mirabeau had certainly preceded him in the field; but their confused ideas fade into obscurity when compared with the masterly writings of the Northern philosopher. What Harvey accomplished for medical science, Adam Smith did for political economy. They laid down and established fundamental principles. They explored the mazes of the labyrinth, and left a clue to guide all who followed after them. But their efforts at first met with that virulent opposition, which is too often the fate of original genius. We who behold the river sweeping past us in the full tide of its course, after it has received the waters of a thousand tributary springs, are too apt to forget the obstacles which impeded and delayed the progress of the humble stream at its fountain source.

In France, the system of incorporated trades had so deeply taken root, that it remains questionable whether anything short of the destructive violence, which marked the progress of the First Revolution, could have struck off the shackles of monopoly, and set industry free. Under the ancient monarchy, it was customary for the state, as well as these mercan-

tile corporations, to regulate and fix the wages of labour according to some arbitrary standard; and, indeed, in every European kingdom, this vicious interference was more or less practised. Oftentimes, not satisfied with setting a value upon labour, the governments attempted also to put restrictions upon the price of provisions. Dr. Burn, who wrote a century ago, observes, "It is time to lay aside all endeavours to bring under strict regulations, what, in its own nature, seems incapable of minute limitation; for if all persons in the same kind of work were to receive equal wages, there would be no emulation and no room left for industry and ingenuity." Labour is the property of the workman—it is his capital—the commodity he has to sell; he should, therefore, enjoy the privilege of employing it any way he may think proper, and of taking it to that market in which he can dispose of it to the best advantage. The state can have no more real grounds to interfere with the duration or limit the price of the workman's labour, than it can to require the capitalist to spend only a certain portion of his income, or to employ only a fixed amount of capital in his business. The wages are just as valuable to the workman, as the money is to the capitalist; and the natural rights of both parties should be equally respected and upheld. Where the condition of society is in a strictly wholesome state, where the balance between capital and labour hangs natural and level, it is questionable whether the legislature can take the slightest step towards the regulation of labour, as regards price or duration, without preju-

dicing the interests of the whole community ; but in a society where capital has much the vantage ground of labour, where the capitalists have accumulated gigantic fortunes, and where over-population has stocked the labour market to redundancy, a cautious and guarded interference on the part of the ruling powers may be advisable. But even then a distinction should be made between the difference of sex and age. Thus, adult males may be always safely left to battle with the vicissitudes and struggle against the difficulties of competition, whereas females and children having naturally less ability to protect their own interests, might with justice claim from the legislature some intervention, to prevent themselves from being oppressed. It is exceedingly difficult to establish any direct regulation with regard to the hours of labour, without, at the same time, injuring the interests of both the workman and his employer. Commerce is notoriously subject to fluctuation and irregularity ; a merchant may one day be without a single order, and the next he may require to be working his factories day and night. All laws, therefore, which hamper and obstruct his movements, cannot be considered in any other light than as vexatious and impertinent. The owner of a windmill would think it very unjust if laws were passed, to prevent him from working after sunset ; yet, the legislation which shuts up the factory and the workshop at a certain hour is not a whit more defensible. The English Parliament, from motives of humanity, have thought proper to limit even the labour of males to ten hours in the factories ; but such

a course is more an apparent than a real benefit, for what law can prevent the men from working in other crafts after the factory is closed ; besides which, it must be unfair to limit the workman in the factory to ten hours' labour, when another one in a different trade is left entirely free from legislative restriction.

But the Socialist is not satisfied with the wages and duration of labour being placed under the controul of the state. He goes still farther, and declares that the government should have the entire regulation of all production ; that under a gigantic system of national workshops, every capitalist should be driven out of the field, and every labourer taken into the employment of the state. The capitalist is, however, not left entirely without hope ; he may enter the association and receive interest for his investment—that is as long as his capital lasted, for we apprehend that he might go in at one door of the "*ateliers sociaux*" very rich, and come out at the other very poor. But he is to be denied all participation in the profits, a restriction which need not have grieved him, since he might be sure that there would never be any. During the first year of these national workshops, M. Blanc proposes that the government should regulate them ; but after the expiration of that term, the workmen are to elect their own hierarchy for self-government. After enumerating in his book about a thousand decrees and rules for these ateliers, M. Blanc gravely asks, "Would the struggle be long to drive the capitalist out of the field with such an organized system as this ?" As if any one could doubt it. As

if any one were foolish enough to suppose that lambs could be left in the presence of hungry wolves without being eaten up. Nevertheless, some consolation is afforded even to the capitalist, inasmuch as he is invited to partake of the sublime pleasures of association; a life, which, if we may believe M. Blanc, surpasses anything mortals have hitherto enjoyed. "Who," says M. Blanc, "would prefer isolation to the incontestible excellence of living in community? Who would prefer the silence of solitude to the embrace of fraternity?" But how long this gregarious multitude of human beings would herd quietly together, remains a problem yet unsolved. The members of the commune, both capitalists and labourers, might sit down together like a "Happy Family," or they might fight like so many tigers; for even in the Provisional Council, every action was not quite of a fraternal character, unless a slap in the face is to be considered as a social compliment.

Being fully aware that sceptical enquirers would doubt whether any government could superintend such a complication of tasks, as his "Organization of Labour" would impose, M. Blanc prepares to meet all objections, by dilating upon the simplicity of the mechanism he should use. Thus, with a considerable degree of art, he bends and interweaves two facts to support and strengthen his arguments. The state, says he, undertakes, through the medium of the post-office, to deliver at a precise hour, all that thirty-four millions of men can write to one another. Napoleon had a million of men under arms, whom

he animated with his will, who lived in his life, and kept pace with his march. But these facts are nothing to the purpose if closely examined. The government merely levies a tax upon letters to pay the expenses of their delivery; and places the surplus balance to the service of the state revenue. When originally instituted, the postal charges were regarded as a species of property tax—correspondence then being principally limited to merchants and men of education; hence, the amount of the fines remained very disproportionate to the expense incurred, and the receipts of the post-office formed an important item of the national treasury. In the whole transaction of postal communication there is no speculation; no liability to alteration of value; no risk of deterioration of property, or of over-production; no markets to supply; and no goods to sell. The institution is not in the slightest degree analogous to the social workshops, nor does the success of its administration afford the slightest guarantee for their prosperity. Of the system upon which Napoleon maintained his army, the less that is said the better—when he occupied a fertile country they were well provided for; when he marched over deserts and mountains they starved on the road, or froze in their tents. He was a man of universal genius, a soldier, a legislator, and a philosopher; he could discern character at a glance, and read the human heart like a book; he understood mankind practically, and moved them about like chess-men; but he never organized social workshops, nor is there the slightest resemblance in anything he did or said to these philosophic toys.

Amidst the anarchy which followed the revolutionary days of February, several of these *ateliers sociaux* were actually established. M. Albert, and his colleagues of the Fauxbourg de St. Antoine, having exhausted their colloquial wisdom upon the question at the Luxembourg, proceeded into the street to re-organize the social system upon a sublime basis. The mountain was in labour, and every one stood in wonder to see what it would bring forth. Everybody thought, with Sir Roger de Coverley, that a good deal might be said upon both sides of the question. Like a great many other European institutions, the national workshops would have succeeded admirably, if there had been no expenses; but as, unfortunately, the debts of the *atelier* very soon exceeded its credits, the speculation proved sadly unprofitable. Wherever the workshops effected one improvement, five evils of far greater magnitude were produced; wherever one workman was put into employment, five were thrown out of it by the change; and even those *ouvriers* who accepted the mission were never so actively engaged, as when the *payeur* opened his money-box "to make things pleasant!" Articles were certainly manufactured; there was a wonderful noise and show of business—but it was only show. If the workman made a coat, it cost double as much as the Provisional Government could purchase it for in the next street. Even M. Blanc must have secretly felt that these workshops were a dead failure; he must have been glad to see the lights extinguished, before they burned out. The social library, fortunately, never opened its doors upon the public. A merciful

dispensation, since as every author, however poor or unknown, was not only to be supplied with the means of printing, and making known his talent, but to be rewarded also, the writers must very soon have exceeded the readers. If the committee of enlightened men, chosen to review the works of the social library, had ever accomplished their task, their labours would have formed the eighth wonder of the world. As regards the independence of the public press, upon which the friends of the people generally lay so much stress, we do not quite see how that was to be preserved, if the journalists were employed and paid by the state; it is clear, however, this Cerberus was to have a sop. So great would have been the confusion, and so complete the disorganization of society, had this monster experiment of the *ateliers sociaux* been fully carried out to the lengths which the leading Socialists proposed, that it may be questioned, whether a general pillage would not have been a preferable, and equally equitable substitute. To imagine anything more ridiculous than several of the scenes in this farce, at the Hotel de Ville, is impossible. First, a deputation of omnibus conductors would apply for a rise in their wages, then came the fish-women, then the opera dancers, then the needle-women, at last the barbers appeared with their grievances; but, no sooner had the members of the Provisional Government apparently succeeded in satisfying the wants of so many dissatisfied people, than the gentlemen of the omnibus profession, returned to say, that "something more must be done." At the Luxembourg, difficulties

were equally insurmountable; forty workmen sat there almost day and night to study ardently the labour question, and resolve, if possible, the great industrial problem of the day. The Amphycionie Council, or the Roman Senate, could not have assembled with more gravity, than did the *Commission de Gouvernement pour les Travailleurs*. The members of the Committee avoided the common fault of French legislators, who generally premise their codification, by referring to the creation, or the deluge, about natural rights; the colleagues of M. Albert knew nothing of the ancient, and very little of the modern world. In the course of the enquiry, numerous authorities were placed before them. but as they could neither read nor write, this was more the show of learning than the reality. They turned over the pages of Pothier, and peeped into Puffendorf, but knew as little about the contents of these books, as they did of the inhabitants of the moon. Perplexed with codes and decrees, ordinances and edicts, regulations and restrictions, the poor workmen soon became convinced, that their hands were more adapted for the mallet than the pen.

“ They found no end, in wandering mazes lost.”

The French nation also at length began to perceive, that the longer the workshops were open, and the sublime system of Socialism was in operation, the greater was the number of people out of employment, and the larger the deficit at the Treasury; so, like sensible traders, they gave the Provisional Council notice to quit, and wound up the accounts of the firm.

If M. Blanc had used his reasoning faculties more, and his imaginative powers less, the result of his labours might have been more satisfactory; if, instead of viewing the world as it ought to be, he had regarded it as it is, he might have accomplished improvements in the social system worthy of his abilities, and far more substantial than national factories. His purpose was right, but the means he adopted to effect it were perfectly erroneous and powerless. To carry out his Socialist views, would be to convert ministers into pedlars, and turn legislative assemblies into halls of commerce. Instead of endeavouring to embarrass the executive government, by imposing duties upon it, which no government ever could perform, he might have proposed some rational plan for relieving the necessities of the working classes, in the shape of an efficient poor-law. A property tax, equally and impartially levied upon the opulent part of the community, would have furnished an ample fund to support the really necessitous poor, and only have consumed that money, which has now been squandered in the insane projects of revolutionary enthusiasm. If all destitution could be clearly traced to improvidence and idleness, poverty would have no real claim upon property for relief; but, as thousands are thrown helpless upon the world by casualties over which they have not the slightest controul, it is but an act of common justice, on the part of the legislature, to attempt to make a provision for such persons, and offer some assistance to those who fall into the abyss of want from unforeseen calamity, or unavoidable misfortune.

It was an apothegm of Lord Bacon's, "that most rebellions spring from the stomach." People, driven to desperation by the pangs of hunger, do not stay to enquire about the rights of kings or the authority of governments, but rush into the heated conflicts of rebellion, with the madness of delirium and the recklessness of despair. A wise government, therefore, endeavours to prevent such evils, by preparing resources equal to meet these emergencies when they occur. There is always a season of abundance and prosperity, if men will but take advantage of it to secure themselves against that of future scarcity and want. There were the seven years of plenty in Egypt, before the seven years of famine. The French nation are, however, about the last people in the world to take precautions, or to look beyond the present hour. It is not in their nature to prophesy evil times, or to hive against the winter season. Like the butterfly, it is sufficient for them if the clouds pass away, and the sun shines upon their ephemeral pleasures. Hence, they are continually subjected to political troubles, which certainly might be mitigated, if not wholly avoided, by careful foresight and common prudence. The establishment of a certain number of *maisons de charité* in each department, for the purpose of affording to the indigent the ordinary necessities of life, viz., food, shelter, and clothing, would remove one fertile source of complaint, which now constantly furnishes a weapon to be used by the ill-disposed against every successive government that

"Frets its hour upon the stage."

To prevent this provision for the relief of mendicancy and want from being abused by the idle, the aid granted to able-bodied people should be of the rudest nature, and every individual who had once been admitted to receive the protection of the government in these asylums, should henceforth forfeit all political privileges as a free citizen of the state. In England, philanthropy has so far exceeded reasonable limits, that the prisons and poor-houses are maintained at a cost quite beyond the bounds of actual necessity; the inmates being incomparably better fed and clothed than many of the working classes, who are paying rates and taxes from their daily labour to support these institutions. The plan of making the inmates of the French alms-house employ themselves upon any manufacture, would be injudicious, as that would only increase the expenses without affording any real assistance. A strict discipline, an indifferent diet, and certain restraints in the shape of confinement, would dispose the occupants of the alms-house to return to their employment or seek fresh work, and prevent the public funds from being misapplied in maintaining the incurably indolent. The whole system might be supported from a tax, levied upon the property and income of the country, strictly for the purpose; the applicants for relief, being referred to different alms-houses, so as to maintain a certain number in each asylum, proportionate to the aggregate admitted. It surely must be safer for the rich to contribute a certain amount of taxation annually for the support of the poor, than to be periodically subjected to forced loans, spoliation, etc.,

and to find their property every now and then decimated by a revolutionary committee. It may be presumptuous to make the remark, but we cannot help thinking these *maisons de charité* would have been more protective to the cause of order, than the girdle of massive fortifications, which at present encircles the French capital; and under whose walls, so much treasure lies idle, if not actually buried. The national debts of the different European states, now almost preclude the possibility of efficient government; and if deficits are allowed to increase annually in times of peace, the weight of financial difficulty will ultimately crush civilization, and bring back the days of poverty and barbarism. Europe must beware, or the Cossack will replace the Goth.

IV. The more violent Socialists, such as M. M. Proudhon and Leroux, declare property to be a theft. These people and their infamous doctrines, are too contemptible to be noticed. Every one knows that the equality they propose to establish is a mere pretext for spoliation; and that it is never intended to last after this object is once attained. What they really aim at, is the transfer of property from the hands of the present possessors to new claimants; for M. Proudhon does not need us to inform him that property must always exist, and that some men will always contrive to obtain more of it than others. The Communists, who entertain these extreme opinions, remind us of the judge in one of the revolutionary tribunals of 1793, who was called upon to decide between two suitors, each laying claim to a particular

estate. The rightful owner appearing in court with a bundle of documents, proceeded to prove that his family had held the land in undisputed possession for above a hundred years. "Stop, my good friend," said the judge, "I am satisfied. You have occupied it long enough; let it be given to this poor man; it is his turn now." The philosophic Socialists certainly make loud professions of their respect for the rights of property, and would be very indignant if they were accused of aiming at any clandestine plans, for the violation of its sacred privileges. We do not wish to question the honesty of their views upon this point, nor shall we attempt to impugn them, by casting malicious reproaches upon their conduct. They commence by defining property as "that portion of worldly goods, which is secured to the citizen by the law;" but this definition is not altogether satisfactory, unless, at the same time, property is declared to have a preponderant influence in the organization and maintenance of the law; for if the law is to be framed and administered by a legislature, elected upon the basis of universal suffrage, the barrier which protects property becomes remarkably precarious. In any society where there is one rich man, we may fairly consider that there are fifty men poor in different degrees of comparison also, besides many others who are perfectly destitute; therefore, so long as the powers of legislation are exercised by the whole community, upon the basis of an imprescriptible equality of natural rights, those persons who possess property are always at the mercy of those who possess none.

Property, under such a system of government, may be respected or it may not be ; but no one can believe that it is very secure, or that it enjoys much of the liberty which is the peculiar boast of democracy ; more particularly when the Socialists are constantly describing this liberty, as consisting, " not in the *right* to do this or that, but in the *might* to do it." For instance, a legislature elected by universal suffrage might decree that upon the transmission of property by testamentary bequest, one-half should be surrendered to the purposes of the state ; a proceeding, which, though manifestly a flagrant act of injustice, could not be declared illegal ; because those who have the *might* to make the laws, had sanctioned it by their approval. If property is not in the possession of power, power will very soon take possession of property.

All civil government is founded upon the principle of subordination, for however expanded may be the suffrage which decrees its origin and constitution, there must be a culminating point somewhere, and this puts an end to complete equality. To acquire stability, or to enjoy any permanent continuity of tenure, civil government must be based upon property ; for property is alike the exponent of ability, intelligence, and industry, whether the possessor has acquired it, or whether he has inherited it from ancestral sources. Wealth, in the abstract, represents either intellect or virtue. Property is the only agency through which the mental qualities of the masses of society can be effectively concentrated, and safely

applied to support civil government; for if personal qualifications were made the basis of government, interminable disputes would inevitably result. If the influence of property be discarded in the formation of civil government, society is thrown back to the condition in which it existed, amidst those barbaric epochs, when the powerful ruled and the weak obeyed. If property be denied a preponderant voice in framing the laws of a state, public order, instead of being preserved by the expressed will of the majority of the people, is preserved by the centralisation of martial power. France has, at this moment, a legislature and an executive elected by universal suffrage; but she is at the mercy of a Prætorian band of soldiery, just as much as ever the Roman empire was. There is no permanence or durability in such a government; it derives nothing from antiquity; it surveys the future with but little hope; the actual present is all that it can enjoy. In a single day the Republic may be changed into an Empire, a Monarchy, or a Social Democracy of the wildest character. Property is supposed to be secure under such a form of government, but it sleeps upon a volcano, and no one can tell how soon the eruption will take place. Time has not robbed the historian's assertion of its truth—"Reipublicæ forma, laudare facilius quam evenire et si evenit haud diuturna esse potest."

As almost every proposal which emanates from the Socialist school appears to aim at the extermination of the capitalist, it may be reasonably supposed that the Communists desire to accomplish this feat. The

slightest reflection will convince any one who is not a visionary theorist, that, without the constant presence of the capitalist, the progress of civilization and improvement must be at once arrested. Without capital commerce would degenerate into barter—credit would be limited—mercantile speculation would be contracted, if not abandoned—and even the ordinary negotiations of trade rendered difficult. No large public works could be accomplished—no charitable institutions maintained—nor could the researches of science be undertaken, except upon an insignificant scale. The march of mankind would at once become retrograde, and society, instead of enjoying the pleasures of luxury, the refinements of art, and the elegancies of taste, would return to the clay-built hut, the meager fare, and the savage wildness of aboriginal barbarism. By lessening the amount of capital in a nation—for property cannot be entirely destroyed, there must follow a corresponding diminution of energy and intelligence in its inhabitants; and if the pernicious principles inculcated by Socialism, were to be widely accepted by the different European states, the dormancy of Oriental enervation, and the torpor of Asiatic immobility, would inevitably replace that rich, varied, and complex civilization, which has hitherto rendered Europe, the guide, the teacher, and the monitor of the world.

But that which annoys and puzzles the Socialist more, perhaps, than any other grievance, is the immunity from labour enjoyed by those who are living upon inherited property, or upon an income derived

from accumulated capital; and as these citizens are not necessarily either employers or employed, their independent position remains a rampart, against which the fire of the Communist artillery is uniformly directed. The great crime of which these persons are accused, is, the fact of their consuming without producing; of their necessitating the labour of others, without performing any reciprocal duties to benefit society in return. Every one, according to the Communistic doctrine, ought to employ labour if he have the means, whether he requires it or not; and many Socialists even go so far as to propose seriously, that each citizen, possessing a certain amount of property, should be compelled by law to hire and maintain a certain number of workmen. Thus, the poor capitalist, like Sinbad, never rises but with an *ouvrier* seated upon his back, and, though constantly reminded that he is in the presence of Liberty, always finds the face of the Goddess turned away from him. A purely idle person, it must be admitted, is an incubus upon society, even although he may be living strictly within the bounds of prudence and economy, as well as paying an honourable obedience to the laws and regulations of the state. If the injury, inflicted upon the community by this class of capitalists, exceeds the advantages derived from the existence of all other capitalists combined, the defect would be worthy of consideration; but if, as we imagine to be the truth, these idlers are but as dust in the balance, when compared with the number of active and energetic men, who, though capable of commanding perfect leisure,

yet voluntarily fulfil various employments, the evil is not sufficiently demonstrable to demand enquiry, much less to warrant a forcible violation of the rights of property. Even supposing a man possessed of riches does hoard them with a view of accumulation, there must have been industry and perseverance at some time or other employed to form the original nucleus; and if one generation choose to perform a double task of labour, that their descendants may enjoy a life of ease, what law, founded upon the principles of common justice, can be framed to prevent them from so doing? Society is not injured or defrauded from such a course having been pursued, but is rather benefitted and strengthened, since it is enriched. The fortune may accumulate and remain dormant for one, two, or three generations, but, in the course of time, the money will be scattered abroad again, and find its way back into the ordinary channels of commerce and speculation.

Of those persons who enjoy an independence, which is sufficient to absolve them from the necessity of following any professional or mercantile avocation for a livelihood, few can be considered to spend their lives in a state of intrinsic indolence.

“How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle; and who, justly in return,
Esteems that busy world an idler too.”

A single glance must convince any one but a Communist, that the duties performed by this class of capitalists, who have been attacked with so much vehemence, are such as could not be dispensed with,

without prejudicing the general interests of social civilization. How many public offices are filled by persons of the highest character and ability, who receive no remuneration in return. How many men devote their time and their resources in favouring the discoveries of science, and cultivating the pursuits of art, without seeking, or even expecting any adequate recompense. How many, like Howard, but more hidden and unseen, have exhausted their fortunes upon the most philanthropic designs. And what is to replace this gratuitous assistance afforded by the rich, when the channels from which their benevolence flows forth, are dried up and stopped. Does any one suppose, that the abundance of charity will spring up in a golden flood from that wretched tribe of third-rate novelists and indifferent moralists, who are constantly hoping to make their nonsensical mediocrities and unprofitable inventions palatable to the masses, by seasoning them with scandalous and malicious accusations against the rich? Does any one suppose, that all the virtues of the world are to be found in the closets of those miserable satirists, who, deficient in the wit that charms, employ the poisoned slander that detracts; of those literary hirelings, who feed upon the characters they defame, and flourish upon the reputations they destroy? Does any one suppose, that the higher orders of society can be beneficially exchanged for such wretched substitutes? If so, they will be grievously mistaken.

It is a common and a vulgar error, but one very generally credited, that the rich are perpetually living

in a state of misanthropic despondency and mental disquietude. So often depicted in works of fiction as preyed upon by the canker of despair, or wearied with the satieties of pleasure, people imagine that men of rank and women of fashion are so many unfortunate beings, whose hearts are literally eaten up with sorrow, or corroded with care. Even M. Blanc supports this fallacy, thus, he says, "Observe the existence of the rich man, it is replete with bitterness. Why so? Is it that he lacks health, youth, or flatterers? Is it that he distrusts the sincerity of friends? No! he is wearied of pleasure—behold his grief; he has satiated desire—behold his malady:" and, after a few more remarks, he declares that the rich throw away life like a squeezed orange. This language is, however, true only to a certain extent. He has condemned classes, where he should have censured individuals—he has painted as the rule, that which he should have painted as the exception. No one can doubt, but that persons who have been denied the advantages of birth and education, are, when suddenly raised to affluence and rank, peculiarly liable to degenerate into sensualists and libertines. They are like snow placed before a fire, and melt under a temperature to which they are unaccustomed. But to describe every one who possesses property or enjoys rank, as coming within the pale of this class of depraved profligates and miserable buffoons, is utterly false and unjust. Persons who inherit property or title, are, for the most part, well educated, and gifted with a natural taste which widely distinguishes them

from the vulgar upstarts, who parody their actions and ape their manners, which immeasurably separates them from those contemptible pretenders, who, substituting ribaldry for humour and profanity for wit, indulge in the sensualities of the Epicurean, without the redeeming qualities of sensibility and refinement. In the one instance, the distinctions of rank are worn with the ease and elegance of a bracelet; in the other, they encumber with the harshness and restraint of a fetter. To imagine, that the higher orders of society are constantly unhappy, is to take a very limited and narrow view of their position. Their desires are often more humble, and their habits more frugal than those of many of their inferiors; their lives are spent amidst that elegant simplicity of style which always springs from a correct and erudite taste; their pleasures are simple, but refined; their manners unostentatious, but dignified; moreover, they are better educated and better informed than that "sovereign people," who are supposed, in the present day, to enjoy a monopoly of learning and wisdom. When Boswell asked Dr. Johnson, one evening at the Mitre, if he thought all men equally happy, he replied, "No! happiness consists in the multiplicity of agreeable consciousness; the ignorant may be equally satisfied as the educated, but not equally happy—a small glass and a large one may be equally full, but the large one holds more than the small." If, however, the rich really are afflicted with these melancholy feelings of satiety and ennui, they are not left without the means of escape, since M. Blanc declares, that Socialism will quickly restore them to

happiness. "Nobody," says he, "not even the rich, are interested in the preservation of social order, as it now exists." Such advice as this the capitalist must take "*cum grano salis*;" for how his pleasures are to multiply, in proportion as his property diminishes, requires some explanation. He would, we fear, be paying very dear for thus "hearing something to his advantage!"

Among the numerous imaginary defects of society, M. Blanc lays great emphasis upon the fact, that the man who is born poor, finds everything around him appropriated and occupied. He considers it a grievous wrong, that the mendicant cannot enter the first house upon the road and take possession, or open the garden gates of the rich man and pluck the fruit. After describing a few similar privations to which the poor are subjected—such as the denial to take water from an enclosed well—he resorts to the old sophism, that the produce of the earth cannot be claimed by particular individuals, but that it belongs, upon the principle of an imprescriptible and natural equality, to the whole community. This bold assertion is not worth refutation, for it is simply nothing more or less than to propose the abolition of all civil government; and if the majority of the people are resolutely determined to return to savage life, it is impossible for the minority to resist them. In such a case, arguments and entreaties would be a mere waste of time; and it would be a much wiser plan for people to burn their clothes, paint their bodies, plant fig-trees, and set off in quest of wild-fowl, than to weary themselves in

endeavouring to establish Utopias that would not work, and firing minute guns for Oceanas that would not last. It must be a cleverly-contrived constitution indeed, which could furnish every poor man when he comes into the world with a mansion, a wine cellar, and a suit of purple and fine linen. Even M. Cabet, in describing the elysium of his Icarian commonwealth, was compelled to admit, that a lottery must be introduced, when the applicants became more numerous than the gifts he had to bestow; and, that as there were only sufficient saddle-horses in Icaria for a tenth-part of the population, each citizen was only to enjoy his ride once in ten days. These ideal and chimerical visions about framing political systems, which are to attain perfection, and be devoid of evil, have existed ever since the days when Plato laboured upon the construction of his imaginary Republic. Fenelon and Rousseau, Fourier and Louis Blanc, but follow in the path that others have trodden before them; sages and philosophers, schoolmen and alchemists, have sighed away their lives, in attempting to discover the hidden panacea. The human mind still has its chameleon hues of alternate pleasure and sorrow, of alternate happiness and despair. Futurity still shrouds the promised magician from our sight. The age of pausophy is yet to come.

Not content with describing the original imperfections which attend the condition of the poor man at his birth, M. Blanc declares that competition starves him through life, and effectually keeps him in a continuous state of destitution. To remedy this evil,

equality and liberty, with the aid of a little poetical license, are made sufficient to accomplish the task of affording him a comfortable pecuniary regeneration. The state is compared to the father of a family, who, in feeding his children, would give a larger proportion of victuals to the sickly and delicate, than he would to the healthy and robust; hence, says the Socialist, the state should assist the poor upon the same principle. This proposition is, perhaps, the wildest and most absurd of any yet started by the school; for who is to decide between the conflicting claims of thirty millions of people? who is to effect an apportionment satisfactory to all? who is to persuade each citizen that the means afforded for the display of his talents are sufficient? When this social distribution commences, the capitalist may well begin to button up his pockets, and declare himself *en état de siege*. It would be the St. Bartholomew of property. Competition is, however, not quite so destructive in its operation, as the Communists represent; nor have industrious people so much difficulty in obtaining employment, as M. Blanc would make us believe. It may be a misfortune to be born poor, but it is not one to remain so. The field of labour is open to all; and the reward is generally proportioned to the toil. *Aide toi et ciel te l'aidera* would prove a far better text for the Socialist's discourse, than his ordinary farrago about natural rights and natural equality; since, to suppose that any body of legislators can contrive a system for making indolence as effective as industry, and conferring an equal recompense to each, is preposterous.

The other day there was a machine constructed, that gave the inventor an idea, that he had accomplished perpetual motion, but, unfortunately, he forgot that the machine would wear out; so the Socialists, in promulgating their discovery of a philosophy, which ensures perpetual happiness, forget that property will wear out at last, like the machine. Socialism is the political economy of the Arabian Nights.

Mankind must exist under one of three conditions—in a state of barbarism, which admits of license; in a state of military subordination, which admits of authority and protection; in a state of civil subordination, which admits of justice and true freedom. Nomadic nations generally commence their existence, without establishing any form of government, or submitting to any social laws. Engaged in the precarious pursuits of the chase, and subsisting almost entirely upon the natural fruits of the earth, men, in the condition of savage or aboriginal life, seldom look beyond the actual wants and necessities of the present hour. As they neither create property, nor take permanent possession of territory, but content themselves with the spontaneous productions of nature, their lives are spent in fulfilling the humblest and most transitory occupations which can engage the human mind. They have no communication external to their own horde; no laws to govern them; no superior power to controul them; no chief to combine them; but lead a wandering and migratory kind of life, living and dying without leaving a single memorial to prove that they have ever existed. They require neither the

magistrate to administer justice, nor the soldier to defend them ; and even when they have become sufficiently numerous to form a tribe, the only distinctive marks admitted amongst them, are those arising from age, or personal qualifications. Each man protects himself from injury ; and endeavours to punish affronts, by resorting to violence and force. In this condition of mankind, license supplies the place of law, and revenge serves the purposes of justice. This is Barbarism.

The second condition in which society can exist, is that of despotism. This form of government is that which is usually adopted by pastoral nations, as they emerge from barbarism. Men take permanent possession of the soil, and begin to cultivate it ; they acquire property, and seek the means to preserve it. One amongst them, who is pre-eminently distinguished for personal prowess in the field of battle, and who has, by martial superiority, acquired a larger share of territorial property than his companions, is chosen as their chief ; whilst others, who possess smaller portions, support his claims, and strengthen his authority, in order to ensure protection for themselves. Every one pays a willing submission, and a respectful deference to this superior chief, because their individual property is safe only so long as he is securely placed upon the seat of power, and thus enabled to preserve order. A state is formed, and a government established on the principle of military organization ; the ruler is powerful, his followers obedient, and thus sufficient authority is conferred upon him to preserve order

within, as well as to defend from external aggression. Feudalism originated in this manner: at first, the neighbouring population upon the approach of danger; took refuge within the walls of the feudal castle; as vassals and serfs, they paid homage, and swore allegiance to their feudal lord; as their ruler, he protected them under the shield of martial power. They consigned their lives and their liberties into his keeping; they surrendered their natural rights; in a word, they became subjects and slaves. The tendency of this peculiar form of government, was to combine and agglomerate small states into large ones—the fiefs uniting to form baronies; the baronies uniting to form kingdoms. Most of the European monarchies derive their origin from this source, and were formed in this manner. In a despotic government the chief is everything, the rest of the population are comparatively nothing; they resign their individual freedom into his hands, and thus enable him, by a concentration of power, to afford protection to the whole community. Despotism always rests upon the basis of martial force—it is the dominion of the sword. Under such a form of government, public order is strictly preserved, and property protected; but every one sacrifices his personal freedom except the chief, who is the supreme authority of the state. The will of the ruler is omnipotent; he defines the law, and enforces it; he dispenses justice and administers it; authority and subordination are perfectly established. In such a condition men are protected, but they are enslaved; they can acquire property, but they hold it at the

mercy of their ruler. License still exists, but it is the license of the one, and not of the many. The law is established, but justice, and freedom, and liberty, are yet far off. In a word, the will of an individual is above the law. This is Despotism.

The third condition in which society can exist, is that which men enjoy under the shadow of a free government. In proportion as the inhabitants of a despotic state become more enlightened, and in proportion as property becomes more universally diffused amongst them, liberty gradually encroaches upon despotism, until the rough edges of arbitrary power are worn away. The most perfect form of government, is that which admits the largest number of persons to participate in its administration:—thus, a legislative assembly, elected by two millions of people, excels one elected by two-hundred thousand persons, supposing the legislation of each to be equally sound and impartial. A government based upon universal suffrage, like that of France, would rank much higher in the estimation of political economists, than a limited parliamentary representation like that of England, or an oligarchy like that of Venice, provided an equal amount of liberty were compatible with each. A republic, admitting universal suffrage as its fundamental principle, not only supposes the people to be exceedingly virtuous and incorruptible, but as possessing a very high degree of intelligence also. Mankind have, however, seldom been able to prove themselves equal to encounter this ordeal of a pure democracy; and the ordinary fate of these ideal

fabrics of political perfection, is their sudden metamorphosis into a stern and unrelenting despotism. Governments, established upon the basis of property, afford, perhaps, the greatest possible amount of practicable liberty, and have always been proved by the testimony of history, as more stable, as well as more serviceable than those which are erected upon the broader, but less secure foundations of natural right. They allow a sufficient number of the people to take part in their administration for the prevention of tyranny and corruption, without admitting enough to engender licentiousness and anarchy. Hence, they have always been the most widely adopted, as well as the most uniformly successful. The history of democracy, wherever that polity has been veritably established, is invariably a catalogue of tumults, revolutions, and civil wars; while, on the contrary, governments which have an aristocratic tendency, and derive their essential strength from the basis of property, are characterised by a greater degree of regularity, and are far less subjected to the perils and vicissitudes of political passion, or popular mutability. Athens, perhaps, enjoyed a more democratic constitution, than did any other nation of antiquity, yet it was found necessary to curb the licentious passions of her people, by reverting to an oligarchy. England can boast of a more unbroken career of freedom than any other modern state, yet property has always remained the foundation stone, upon which her popular privileges have been erected. A free government is based upon public opinion—it is the supremacy of the law. A free

government is that in which the law is superior to the power of any individual, however exalted may be his rank, or however widespread his possessions. A free government is that in which justice is administered according to the dictates of the law, and not according to the will of an individual. A free government is that which ensures to the inhabitants of a state, protection from the aggression of other independent societies; protection from any personal violence offered by their fellow-citizens; protection from a violation of their rights, as established and guaranteed by the law. No one, however humble, is excluded from the privilege of appealing to the law. No one, however powerful, is able to resist or set aside the law. The law is omnipotent. It is the expressed will of the majority of the people. It affords protection to the citizen, it requires obedience in return. This is Liberty.

Socialism, if accepted by the people, must prove fatal to Liberty, for it would reproduce Barbarism, or necessitate Despotism. In the place of universal equality, there would be universal poverty; in the place of liberty, there would be tyranny or license; in the place of fraternity, civil war and bloodshed. Socialism is the knell of civilization, the grave of true freedom.

The first rudimentary principle of all civil society, is, and ever must be, an inviolable respect for the rights of property. Once disregard or violate these rights, and not only would production cease, but property itself would begin to decline also. Who would

accumulate capital, if he were not certain of enjoying it? Who would take the pains to enclose, improve, or cultivate land, if he were not guaranteed in the possession of the results which his labour might produce? Who would tend the herd, or watch the flock, if his cattle were to be placed at the mercy of the *lex fortioris*, and his sheep considered public property, as much as the sparrow on the house-top? The spontaneous vegetation of the forest and the plain might support a few people without the application of capital, but their number would be exceedingly limited, and their diet remarkably rude. Even the Socialist philosopher, shivering in his tent, while waiting for his humble repast of a roasted owl, would begin to doubt the principle of co-operation, and pray that butchers' shops might be re-opened. A letter appeared lately in the columns of the *Times*, from the pen of a German Socialist, who calculated that, at a moderate computation, some millions of heads must be struck off before Communism could be put into complete operation; and this is, perhaps, about the most practical view which has hitherto been taken of the question, for it is evident that if the principle of association is to supersede that of competition, the supply of food will be anything but equal to the demand.

There are many circumstances under which the legislature of a state should, and commonly does, possess the right to interfere with the property of a private citizen; and no reasonable person can object to such an interference, because, in all society, there

must exist more or less reciprocal obligation and mutual forbearance. Individual interest must bend occasionally to the public good; for this is, in fact, the standard by which the rights of property should be regulated and established. If the law protect the property of the rich man, the law also should possess the power to define the tenure upon which he holds it. Thus, if a portion of his lands were required for the construction of a railroad, or any public work, he would be compelled to surrender it upon receiving an equitable compensation; if he wishes to bequeath his property in a peculiar manner, such as by entail, the law very properly demands an adherence to certain juridical regulations. Again, in many governments the capitalist is brought under certain restrictions, such as contributions for the support of the church and the poor, in the shape of tithes and poor-rates. No one objects to these drawbacks upon the possession of property, because every one feels the necessity of their being enforced. As a general rule, those states which enjoy the largest amount of true liberty, are precisely those which afford the greatest security to property, as well as perplex it the least with vexatious limitations. When the feudal system was paramount in Europe, so precarious was the possession of property considered, that many persons made it a common practice to bury valuables, such as gold and jewels, in the earth, and even under the arbitrary monarchies, which succeeded the decline of feudalism, treasure-trove was invariably claimed by the crown, instead of being left in the hands of the finder, or transferred to the owner

of the soil. So, also, mines containing the precious metals were seized by the sovereign, although upon the clearest principle of justice they belonged to the proprietor of the surface land. In proportion as society increases in point of intelligence, in proportion as the law depends more upon reason than upon force for its strength, all arbitrary and unjust violations of the rights of property become mitigated, or abandoned. Any flagrant injustice, committed by the possessors of power, under what may be termed a free government, would be resented by the party injured; and if the wrong were capable of being substantiated and proved, the courts of law are always open to adjudicate upon the disputed point. There is, perhaps, no condition of society in which property is better protected or more secure, than that where wealth is distributed in graduated proportions over the whole mass of its members. Where the higher classes are not the exclusive possessors of riches; where the inferior classes are not wholly destitute; where no one is without something at stake, which would be prejudiced by the laws being infringed upon, or openly violated. In a state enjoying the advantages of such a well-proportioned distribution of worldly goods among its citizens, every individual has a direct concern in maintaining the integrity of the laws, which guarantee the rights of property; and as each class possesses advocates either numerous or powerful enough to assert and vindicate its claims, there is but little danger of one portion of the community being oppressed and sacrificed to serve the interests of the remainder. A

society constructed in this manner, is like the pyramid in the material world—it stands unshaken when the column and the arch are overthrown.

One of the most pernicious doctrines inculcated by the Socialist, is that by which he attempts to persuade the working classes, that the whole profit arising from their labour should be placed at their disposal, and that the capitalist has no claim to reap the slightest benefit from the results of their industry. A more fallacious and destructive theory than this cannot be well conceived; since, if it were practically adopted, the best interests of the labourer would be sacrificed in the attempt. The existence of property is, as we have already observed, the main cause of employment; for without the presence of capital, all labour would be rendered more or less ineffective. Almost every community has thousands of workmen, who do not even possess sufficient capital to purchase the necessary tools for their avocations, much less to obtain the stock in trade, which is required to make their labour profitable and productive. To such classes the capitalist is everything, for without his aid their efforts would be useless and unserviceable. By laying too great a stress upon the value of manual labour, and too little upon that of mental labour, the Socialist induces the workmen to over-rate their capacities and importance. The capitalist, it is true, can do but little without the workman, but it is also true that the workman can do but little without the capitalist. The water-wheel and the stream are useless apart; but when placed in proper apposition, a new power is produced.

If the owner of capital is to run the risk of losing his property, by embarking it in speculative enterprise, surely he must be justly entitled to claim a portion of the profits which result from its application. If by a reconstruction of the social contract, he is to be rigorously denied this participation, the result is clear he would only employ sufficient capital to produce stock and implements for his own hands, without troubling himself about other workmen, who might apply for hire. Hence, there remains but the single alternative, of allowing the relations between the capitalist and the workman, to be regulated by the principle of free competition, or to violate the rights of property by a forcible interference, almost amounting to actual spoliation. That the capitalist should receive the surplus profits which remain after labour has been adequately remunerated, is the most equitable system which can be adopted. But it is more than this, it is even serviceable to the labourer, both as regards his present as well as his prospective condition. First, it saves him the risk of losing his wages altogether, if the article of his manufacture should fail to meet with a favourable market for sale. It permits that subdivision of labour to be effected, which facilitates production, and thus enables the workman to perform more than he could otherwise accomplish; lastly, it often places the capitalist in a position to make the occupation of the workman permanent, and to continue the payment of his wages, when he is disabled by sickness or other casualties. Secondly, in a prospective point of view, it gives a stimulus to the labourer to undertake extra

work, and thus, by saving his surplus wages, to become an employer himself—a fact of daily occurrence, many of the greatest merchants in the world having been originally nothing but common operatives; moreover, it affords him the certainty, that if he accumulate capital, the same advantages and facilities for applying his money to the purposes of trade will be open to him also. With regard to the capitalist, nothing can be more clear than that it is his undoubted right to be remunerated for the skill and judgment he uses, in directing the undertaking upon which his time and money have been expended, as well as for the risk of commercial loss to which he is subjected.

This spirit of discontent, with which the working classes survey the position of all persons possessed of property, is not confined to France alone, since, in almost every European state, similar feelings of suspicion and jealousy are plainly observable. It is the old fable of the quarrel between the body and the members revived—the hands refuse to work for the stomach, the stomach refuses to work for the hands. Even those revolutions which, for the last year or two, have made Europe one wide theatre of revolt, may be almost universally traced to social, rather than political causes. The popular demand may have been raised for increased political power, but the power has only been sought as the means to an end; as the lever by which the treasury of the rich was to be broken open, before its contents were divided and distributed amongst the reckless and the dissolute. Every one is

ready enough to mount the tribune, or the platform, to flatter the working classes, by talking about their rights and magnifying their claims ; but, unfortunately, few persons have the boldness to remind them of their duties. Perpetually stimulated by the declamatory harangues of the Socialist orator, or the platform demagogue, men of narrow education are apt to be deceived and easily drawn into the well-laid net of political disaffection. Hence, it often happens, that the best conducted workmen are those who become the most discontented with their prospects and condition. He can, however, be no true friend to the workman who endeavours to persuade him into the belief, that manual labour is so incomparably superior in value to that of mental labour, and that the latter is next to useless. Every one possessed of common sense must, and ever will, regard the position of the workman with respect ; but few people will be found willing to pay him that ridiculous homage which the Socialists demand. A profession or an occupation is more or less important in the scale, according to the ease or difficulty with which people acquire an education adequate for the proper fulfilment of its duties. Of a hundred individuals, indiscriminately selected, there would probably be hardly one who could not, by a little perseverance, make himself a decent carpenter ; whereas, of the same number, scarcely one could be rendered, even by education, competent to undertake the duties of a judge. And the natural consequences of this disparity between men, in reference to their abilities, is, that the carpenter not only receives a

remuneration very inferior to that of the judge, but occupies also quite a subordinate grade in the scale of social rank. Again, few persons would be found ready to undergo the hardships and privations of avocations, which from their nature are rendered either dangerous or disagreeable, unless some advantages in point of honour or emolument were likely to result. Even Nelson, patriotic as he was, remarked to one of the officers standing by him, before the battle of the Nile commenced, "A peerage, or Westminster Abbey;" and this was no more than the honest sentiment of a honourable mind, the aspiration of a noble and a just ambition. According to the communistic doctrine, the services of such a man were of no more value to his countrymen, than those of any other captain; yet, we venture to assert, that the name of Nelson will be remembered, when millions of English sailors are forgotten and obscured. Nothing can be so prejudicial to the best interests of society, as this attempt to depreciate and undervalue the services of intellectual ability, by exaggerating the importance of mechanical ingenuity to an undue degree. The skies, which overshadow and cloud the path of genius, are already sufficiently dark, without our superadding the bleak and withering blight of neglect. The rewards of mental talent may, it is true, occasionally appear inconsistently lavish; but we should recollect how many pass through all the feverish anxieties of that "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick," before we look with an envious eye upon those more fortunate travellers, who have scaled the hill and gained the

summit of their ambition. How many dramatists have pined away in obscurity and want, to produce a Shakespeare, and a Moliere? How many briefless barristers have been condemned to penury, to bring forth a Somers and a Mansfield, a Portalis and a Berryer?

There is, certainly, nothing extraordinary in the enthusiasm and credulity with which the workmen listen to the opinions, and follow out the precepts of the false prophets, by whom they are deluded. When we consider how many persons of education, and supposed intelligence, become the silly dupes of such glaring impostures as mesmerism and homeopathy—when we reflect what crowds have believed in the mission of Joanna Southcote, and the mysteries of the Unknown Tongue—when we recollect the numbers that were attracted into the deceptive vortex of the Mississippi and the South Sea schemes—the thousands that have subscribed testimonials, and pandered to the trumpery grandeur of Railway Kings—who can be surprised that starving and uneducated workmen, with half-famished families, should put their trust in creeds which promise them the fruits of plenty, and the luxuries of ease, in the place of bitter servitude and eternal toil. It is the preacher rather than the disciple whom we should blame—those who invent the deception rather than those who have not the sagacity to detect the fraud. Upon whatever plan society is organized, the distribution of property must remain subject to the fluctuations of inequality, and all the philosophic disquisitions

of Communism or Chartism will never suffice to alter this ordained disproportion; a disproportion, just as natural and eternal as the mountains and the hills, which render the surface of the earth rugged and uneven. Nor is the vehement manner in which the Socialists assail proprietary rights, a fact solely identified with the history of the nineteenth century; for whoever refers to the annals of the past, will find abundant evidence to prove that in all ages, both ancient, as well as modern, there have been periods when these infamous doctrines, which propose a spoliation and re-distribution of wealth, were for an interval favourably received. In truth, these rebellions of the poor against the rich are almost as ancient as society itself. In the Athenian Republic, Solon found himself compelled to cancel all debts which were owing to the usurers, in order to prevent an equal repartition of property, as demanded by the populace. In the Roman Commonwealth, the Senate prevailed with difficulty in obstructing the introduction of the Agrarian law, as proposed by the policy of Tiberius Gracchus. In the early annals of France and England, the insurrection of the Jacquerie, and that of Wat Tyler, were professedly but preludes to a general pillage of the rich. The progress of the Reformation in Germany was disgraced by the wild and lawless conduct of the Anabaptists of Munster. The levellers formed a conspicuous feature in the English Rebellion of 1640. The designs of the Fifth Monarchy men after the Restoration were of an equally destructive character. Even the French

Anarchists of 1793 appear from subsequent revelations to have contemplated a re-distribution of property, long before the revolting deeds of the Reign of Terror had commenced. Hence, our modern revolutionists prove themselves at best but servile imitators, in their diabolical contrivances for the subversion of social order; and if the experience of history be of any value, their insane schemes, even if ever realized, will enjoy but a brief and transitory existence.

The pretext for all this violent fermentation, which has agitated society in France during the last few years, has been a proposed amelioration in the condition of the working classes. Philanthropy, however, is not always genuine, and if we mistake not, the charity of Socialism, instead of being the virgin ore, is very largely alloyed with hypocrisy and deceit. If the welfare of the poor, the comfort of the operative, and the education of the ignorant, were the ultimate objects of Socialism, it would be difficult to censure the efforts of the teacher, although we might feel certain that his labours were misdirected; but it is to be feared, that the sufferings and vicissitudes of the poor merely served as a text for that discourse, which, by the elegant digressions of the orators who pronounced it, was intended to achieve a very different purpose. Pretending to advocate the cause of the working classes, the Socialist leaders were in reality seeking to accomplish their own elevation. The more complete the equality of others, the more brilliantly would shine forth their own distinctions—for your true democrats always contrive to stand a little above

the mobs they flatter. Increased political liberty for the people, was the outward and visible sign. Increased political power for the demagogue, was the inward and spiritual grace. "Everything by the people, and everything for the people," was the ostensible cry; but under this convenient cloak, this specious disguise, the dagger of destruction was to be directed against the rich. They were to be the real victims—the intended sacrifice; they were to be the peace-offering, placed upon the shrine—the holocaust which could alone appease the vengeance of democratic envy. And what faults had they committed, that required such a cruel retribution as the spoliation of their property, the plunder of their goods? Of what offences could they be accused, to merit such savage punishment, such inhuman persecution? Of what crimes had they been guilty, to deserve those barbarous and ferocious massacres from which even the wild untutored savage of the forest would have shrunk back with horror and dismay? Who would credit, if the eye had not witnessed it, that Frenchmen could be found, so lost to every sense of honour, so deprived of every impulse of manly courage, so utterly devoid of all human feeling, as to take advantage of a fallen enemy, by inflicting upon him tortures that would have disgraced the character of cannibals? What nation has ever yet produced men so dastard and ignoble, as those who betrayed their adversaries into the false security of a pretended parley, to murder them defenceless and unarmed? Even admitting that the higher orders of society were not immaculate, even

conceding that their conduct was not entirely without blemish, surely, their vices were not so foul and abominable as to require the surrender of their property to the harpies of confiscation, the sacrifice of their lives to the demons of revolution. Did they deserve to die by the hands of such wretched miscreants, such diabolical monsters as those who figured upon the barricades of June—

“Who saw those dismal heaps, but would demand
What barbarous invader sacked the land.”

It is some consolation to know, that if France possessed men capable of degrading human nature by such revolting deeds, she also possessed men ready to perish rather than remain silent witnesses of so much infamy and dishonour. What liberal mind does not feel some exultation in observing the victory of those who stood up to vindicate and defend the cause of public order over a detestable faction, more despicable and base than even those which disturbed the peace of Rome, in the days of Marius and Sylla. Who can forbear expressing admiration at the unconquerable heroism of that noble army, which successfully defended the narrow pass-way between civilization and barbarism? Who does not rejoice to see the standard of such matchless legions borne triumphant through the conflict? Who does not admire the conduct of that priesthood, whose ministers went forth as heralds of peace, to quell the warring passions of convulsive anarchy, and civil disorder; whose missionaries, with an heroic fortitude, worthy of the noblest martyrs, marched forth un-

guarded amidst the dagger and the bayonet to fulfil the duties of their sacred office? History can surely record few actions more lofty or sublime; actions as heroically grand, as the occasion which required them was execrably base. Of the urns which contain the ashes of such men, a nation may feel justly proud; they are amongst the noblest relics of which freedom can boast—the highest glories to which freemen can aspire.

In every civilized community a graduated scale of social rank is established by the common consent of its members, to distinguish the solid acquirements of cultivated intelligence, from the vulgar pretensions of ignorant or presumptuous audacity; and it is to the best interests of mankind, that this distinction should be preserved, unless the temple of civilized society is to be stripped and despoiled of all its intellectual ornaments, and converted into an utilitarian workshop for the mere production of the common necessities of life. By the various degrees of rank, by the esteem which attends those who rise through merit to a higher grade, by the contempt which follows those who fall through infamy into a lower grade, industry meets with a due reward, and indolence receives a just rebuke. Those individuals who have attained a high position in the social scale, must conduct themselves well to retain consideration and respect; those who occupy an inferior position, are emulated to improve their condition and rival their superiors. By this inequality of social rank the laudable distinctions of family and birth are established. Society settles upon

an enduring basis; and its foundations, instead of shifting like a bed of sand, at the mercy of every tempestuous wave, become as firm and immoveable as the rocks upon the shore. To preserve the boundaries and defend the confines of privileged rank, a certain degree of jealous exclusion must exist upon the frontiers of each particular grade; for unless the members of a superior order could protect themselves against those of an inferior order, by the maintenance of artificial but recognised usages, they would be constantly subjected to the intrusion of presumptuous and arrogant impostors. This legitimate principle of exclusion, founded, as it is, upon a sense of honourable pride, has always hitherto remained an insurmountable barrier to the agitator and the demagogue. This is the file which the angry viper has gnawed in vain. It was for the purpose of destroying this wholesome principle, of breaking down this necessary rampart, that the leaders of the social democracy so much desired to establish an universal inequality. They sought to annihilate by violence and force, that which they could not depreciate by argument and reason. They sought to abolish all social ranks and distinctions in the hope that amidst the troubled fermentation of the alembic, their own interests might enter largely into the composition of the new product. They did not desire to elevate those below them, but they wished to depress those above them. Gorgons of the earth, they turned to stone all upon whom they looked; all that came within the circle of their vision. And do not these envious and malignant feelings of

hatred towards the higher orders of society, take their rise from the basest and the meanest passions of our nature? Do they not spring from the malice and revenge of disappointed minds? Would any generous disposition condescend to such insidious stratagems, such treacherous and cowardly artifices, to accomplish so ignoble and so vile a purpose, as that of subverting the whole fabric of social order for the gratification of paltry prejudices and vindictive passions? Is there nothing in society worthy to be left standing; nothing worthy to be spared from the hand of ruin and desolation? Are we to see every ancient institution and time-honoured privilege swept from the face of the earth? Are we to see the grace of beauty and the pride of birth torn from their high place, to serve the part of spoils and ornaments in some despicable triumph of revolutionary perfidy? Are we to behold those who for centuries have enjoyed the honours and respect due to their spotless virtues and exalted station, abased, and degraded to a common level with the felon and the thief? Are the Noailles and the Montmorencies, the Richlieus and the Montalemberts, to walk undistinguished from the wretches, whom nothing but revolt and anarchy could have snatched from the galleys, or the guillotine? Are the bishops and the priesthood of that enlightened hierarchy, the Gallican Church, to bend down as suppliant parasites and fawning sycophants, in the ante-chambers of ministers, who could be deemed little better than successful rebels? Yet such unhappy consequences must have inevitably ensued, if those who unloosed the

flood-gates of rebellion had not perished in the act; if those who called forth the Janizzaries of revolution had not been strangled by their own body-guard—
“ Sæpe intereunt aliis meditantes necem.”

It is impossible not to perceive that a considerable number of the sensible and reflecting portion of the French people were inclined to lend their sanction to a trial of the great Social and Democratic experiment, or, at least, remained neuter and apathetic, when their assistance, in supporting the cause of order, was the most required. Like the farmer, they were not satisfied with the golden egg every morning, so they allowed the goose to be cut open. As in the Oriental tale, the poor Jewish doctor who thought he had killed the little hunchback, seriously exclaimed, “No man dies without a cause,” so these waverers in France very truly observe, “Poverty cannot arise without a cause.” And, in reasoning upon this proposition, their error, as we imagine, begins: “Wealth,” say they, “accumulates more and more in the hands of the rich; the poor daily increase in number, with diminished means of subsistence; the gulf between the two nations becomes wider and wider. The labour employed in production goes to favour the rich man, but does not assist the poor. The remedy is, to attack the rich, and despoil them of their wealth. The accumulation of property by the few, is the cause of poverty in the many; therefore, to restore general prosperity, let property be re-distributed and scattered abroad by a new social organization.” Now we assert, emphatically, that the accumulation of capital

in the hands of great capitalists, is not the cause of the increasing destitution, which prevails so palpably amongst the lower orders of society in France ; farther, we maintain, that if, by social revolution, such capital was distributed, a slight temporary relief would be obtained, and then the evils of poverty would expand and spread with ten-fold rapidity. But these enormous heaps of capital, unfortunately, do not exist. Examine the condition of any provincial, or manufacturing town in France, and would you find there families possessing large properties, handing them down from generation to generation, and aggrandizing their riches by means of a scanty and economic expenditure ? There is nothing of the kind. On the contrary, through the peculiarities in the laws of testamentary inheritance, property is divided and subdivided too rapidly even for the wholesome progress of civilization ; so much so, that we question, whether the existence of larger stocks of capital in individual hands, would not be a positive gain, rather than a loss to the community at large. A nation which, for more than half a century, has been pretty uniformly vibrating amidst the uncertainties and losses attendant upon political revolution, is not likely to possess much surplus capital. Such is the case with France ; she is, in proportion to her natural resources and industrial means, a very poor state.

The main source of the demoralized and destitute condition of the lower classes in France, is the too rapid increase of population. This is the true cause of the existing poverty, the radical and fundamental

evil. There are certain limits in the growth of population which cannot be exceeded, without endangering the advancement of moral civilization, for when the inhabitants of a country have multiplied to such a degree, that they can hardly obtain the ordinary means of subsistence, a retrogression in their moral condition soon becomes plainly perceptible. And such has been peculiarly the case with both France and England, during the last few years; the ranks of poverty in each country having filled much faster in proportion than those of property: so that the wealth of each individual citizen (supposing the aggregate capital of the nation could be once a year arbitrarily equalized and divided) is becoming less and less upon every succeeding occasion. When the production of human beings proceeds more rapidly than the production of realized capital, each individual is becoming poorer, even though the aggregate wealth of the nation may be increasing; because the surplus capital, saved from labour, after the expenses of production have been deducted, is required to be divided amongst a larger number of claimants. Many writers believe, a growing population to be a sure and infallible sign of improvement in the social condition of a people; but we doubt if there be not a point, at which this test ceases to be any criterion at all. It is an index upon which reliance may be placed in the growth of a colony, or even of a nation to a certain point; but when population increases beyond the amount which can find profitable labour, or productive employment, the redundancy of population is rather indicative of

retrogression and decadency, than of progress and prosperity. So palpable is the mischief, arising from the too rapid augmentation of population, that emigration is now, both in England and France, conducted upon systematic principles, and with every prospect that in the course of a few years, perceptible relief will be obtained. The Spartans killed their super-numerary slaves. Galerius, the Roman emperor, commanded all beggars to be drowned; our modern political economists, however, adopt the more humane methods of colonizing distant lands, and founding new settlements with the superabundance of their surplus population. Indeed, unless some outlet of this kind were constantly kept open in England, pauperisation and barbarism would take possession of society, and rapidly produce a premature decay. But, for this safety valve, the mechanism of social order would soon be destroyed by a fearful and terrible explosion. In France the dangers, arising from surplus population, are magnified and heightened by the wretched mismanagement of her financial administration. Under the government of the late dynasty, the deficit was daily increasing; nor has revolution tended to improve her condition in this important respect. What could be expected from councils, who ordered trees of liberty to be planted, and employed thousands of operatives to march round them with muskets, at the rate of two francs a day? What could be expected from legislative assemblies, whose time was occupied in discussing a miserable jargon, about natural equality and the rights of man; whose only hope

seemed to rest upon the temporary but fictitious assistance of paper money, or the terrible alternative of forced loans upon the rich ? Revolutions are, perhaps, the most expensive pleasures in which a nation can indulge ; they disturb the operations of commerce ; they disarrange and impede the interchange of trade ; they render credit precarious ; they drive capital into hiding places, and diminish instead of increase the employment of the labourer. A country must be very badly governed, in which a revolution could improve the condition of its inhabitants ; and many a Frenchman, in 1850, would be glad to see Louis Philippe walking down the Boulevards, with his umbrella, if the follies and absurdities of the last two years could be blotted out from the page of history.

We consider it to be an established fact, that, for the last few years, population in France has outstripped the means of subsistence ; and the result of this lamentable state of things, is, that the poorer part of the community have remained half-fed, and that the more opulent classes of society have been compelled to forego many luxuries, and content themselves with the ordinary necessities of life. We are inclined to believe, that both these circumstances have taken place, and that through the instrumentality of the latter, the calamities, attendant upon the former, have been considerably mitigated and softened. This remark is, however, more applicable to the provinces than the capital, since nothing but the actual presence of camps in the streets, can prevent a Parisian from enjoying his usual pleasures. Whatever may be the

condition of the inhabitants of provincial France, one may be certain, that in Paris they are either dancing, or cutting one another's heads off in a revolution !

What is the system of Free Trade in corn that the English legislature has just adopted, but a method in which the rich relieve the poor, by diminishing their own luxuries and pleasures, to increase the necessities of life in amount, and thus bring them at a cheapened rate within the reach of the working classes ? Such a course is charitable and philanthropic ; but we should commit a serious mistake to suppose that it indicates a progress in moral civilization. The contrary is the fact ; it shows a marked fall in the barometer of social civilization, it shows that a certain number of people, who have hitherto been enabled to cultivate art, science, literature, and all the higher and more refined occupations of the intellect, must descend from their position, and employ themselves upon mechanical pursuits to obtain a livelihood. In more plain language, suppose a thousand persons, cultivating a new tract of land, as aboriginal settlers, could find subsistence by employing one-half the day in the tillage of the soil, they might enjoy the other half in acquiring intellectual improvement ; but if you place two thousand persons upon the very same ground, they will require the whole day to furnish themselves with the common necessities of life, and would scarcely have sufficient leisure at night, to make their own coffins and bury the dead. When population increases to the frightful extent that it has done of late in England, France, and Germany, remedies, such as Free Trade,

and Revolutionary Taxation of the rich, certainly save society from the imputation of allowing the poor to die of actual starvation ; but they, at the same time, favour the progress of social disease, for the greater the facility with which the working classes obtain subsistence, the more rapidly will the generation of human beings proceed. Whatever measures may be taken by governments, in the shape of free trade tariffs, abolition of the *impot de boisson*, or economic reductions in the price of such commodities as food and clothing, they may rest assured, that an increasing population will always be close upon their heels to render all these efforts nugatory and unavailing. Such legislative provisions are, at best, but mere palliatives, which ward off present distress, without effecting any solid improvement in the social or moral condition of the people ; nay, worse than this, we fear there is but too much reason to apprehend, that, in many instances, the proffered aid of cheap necessities is accepted by the operative only to be abused ; and, that instead of applying the surplus wage to any moral advantage, as regards his family, he consumes it by yielding himself up to the most sensual and degrading excesses. The only practical means of combating this serious evil of over-population, upon which any confidence can be placed, is the principle of systematic emigration, conducted at the expense of the affluent classes of society. If such a charitable object can be effected by voluntary benevolence, so much the better ; if not, it is evidently the duty of a legislature to lend some aid in assisting so praise-

worthy and meritorious a purpose. A small sum of money may be sufficient to place a pauper, who cannot find employment at home, in a colony, or settlement, where his labour would at once become profitable and productive; whereas, the same amount of money, given in the shape of casual alms, or occasional poor-law relief, would leave him still a prey to indigence and want upon his native soil. Emigration is, at once, the most ancient, as well as the most natural and easy method of reducing redundancy of population; it violates no moral law, it breaks in upon no sacred tie, it excites no hostile prejudice. Instead of depriving the poor man of a home, it places him in a situation to obtain one; instead of preventing him from enjoying the pleasures of domestic happiness, it affords him the opportunity and the means of procuring them.

“The world is all before him where to choose.”

As to the “prudential check” of Mr. Malthus, or the “moral and religious culture” of Dr. Chalmers, we are distrustful of their efficacy, because something immediate is required to relieve the existing pressure, and these agencies could only prove beneficial after a lapse of time. To believe, that such means would serve to reduce population, is to believe in the perfectibility of human nature. It is to suppose, that the strongest passions and desires implanted in the breast of man, are to be controlled and subdued by an austere self-restraint, and that the ordinary fallibility of mankind, will be replaced by the virtuous abstinence, and the rigid self-denial, of an anchorite. Even if certain

legal restraints could be placed upon marriage, there is reason to fear, that far worse miseries would result from the indulgence of promiscuous attachments, and illicit affections.

“Naturam expellas furcâ tamen usque recurret.”

In France, the number of foundlings annually amounts to upwards of 130,000, a result, plainly attributable to the protection and encouragement afforded by society, in the establishment of numerous hospitals for their reception. In 1784, the number only reached 40,000; but since that period, the admissions have increased in a direct ratio with the application of charitable funds, for the improvement and enlargement of the hospitals. Even Rousseau, with all his tender feeling, and delicate sensibility; sent no less than five of his children into one of these reservoirs of humanity. This is, indeed, “destroying the sweet name of love.”

One of the chimerical visions of the present age, is the beneficial influence which philanthropists believe will follow the general diffusion of education among the lower classes of society. This is now the panacea for every evil—the nostrum for every social disorder. We are far from wishing to undervalue the importance of education, or to depreciate the services of those charitable persons, who strive to dispel the clouds of ignorance and error, by the efforts of the teacher and the school; yet we feel convinced, that many of the social evils of the day, spring up from this unsuspected source. A sound education, generally makes a good citizen and an obedient subject; but a smattering

and superficial knowledge, such as that which makes a man distinguished in a Mechanics' Institute, or conspicuous in Jacobin Clubs, is a positive injury to society; and it must be evident to every impartial observer, that these scholars of the workshop would be much more usefully employed, in following their ordinary mechanical occupations, than in scattering abroad their mischievous doctrines, like tares amongst the wheat. One of these sheep is sufficient to contaminate a whole flock, and there is no easier method of making a body of workmen discontented or rebellious, than by furnishing them occasionally, with one of these learned pigs! We are never so much alarmed for the welfare of civilization, as when we hear one of these miserable performers, boasting about its progress, and offering to place it under his protection. If the poor, after receiving their scholastic training, read nothing but the Bible or the verses of Marot, the Pilgrim's Progress or the Penny Magazine, no one could doubt but that their position was bettered, and the cause of general morality enhanced. When, however, we observe the infamous and abominable literature, which is circulated amongst the lower classes; when we reflect how possible it is, that their characters and actions may be fashioned after so despicable a model, one begins to doubt whether ignorance itself is not preferable to the pernicious endowments of superficial knowledge. In all ages, in the most enlightened, as well as the most benighted nations, a very large proportion of the people have been doomed to remain uneducated; and it would almost appear to be a pre-

ordained law of nature, that, in every community, a certain number of the inferior population should continue illiterate and rude. If every individual member of society received the same advantages of mental culture, none would be found willing to undertake the menial and subordinate offices, required for the public interest. He who has sufficient intellectual acquirements to fill the capacity of a clerk, or of an accountant, will not tug at the oar, or ferry the rough barge ; and, since the ruder occupations of society are by far the most numerous, to over-educate the working classes, is only to render them dissatisfied with their condition, without materially adding to their social happiness.

Material civilization always precedes moral, or intellectual civilization, and hence, in the early and aboriginal growth of a nation, literature and science commonly attain but a very imperfect developement. In a people thus situated, the time which is not actually employed in procuring the means of subsistence, is spent in extending territory, in preparing the arts of defence, and in exercising the abilities of martial prowess and personal valour. Lord Bacon has observed with much force, " In the youth of a state, arms do flourish ; in the middle age of a state, learning ; and then both of them, for a time, together flourish ; but in the decline of a state, mechanical arts and merchandise." When material civilization approaches perfection, when luxuries begin to be superadded to the necessities of life, when the laws and regulations of civil society become definitely established,

when the rights of property become acknowledged and secured, a portion of the community are placed in a position to cultivate intellectual tastes, and enter the enchanting fields of speculation and philosophy. The proprietor of large estates is absolved from the necessity of personally superintending the occupations of the husbandman; the merchant can entrust his commerce to the care of subordinates; the owner of property can employ an agent to regulate his possessions; even the monarch and the statesman can steal sufficient leisure to patronise and enjoy the works of art, of genius, and of wit. Thus, classes, with all the resources of opulence and power at their command, are enabled to follow the inclinations of talent, and indulge in the gratifications of taste, without prejudicing the interests of the community at large. If not personally gifted with the divine inspiration of genius, they may discern and foster it in others; thus, by happy accident, conferring essential service upon mankind. Zenobia felt flattered by the presence of Longinus. Augustus and Macænas loved to entertain Horace. Leonardi da Vinci expired in the arms of Francis I. Julius II. invited Michael Angelo to the court of Rome. The Emperor Charles V. preferred the conversation of Titian to that of his courtiers. Shakespere was the guest of Queen Elizabeth. Rubens and Vandyck were patronised by Charles I. Moliere was the friend of Louis XIV. Voltaire lived upon familiar terms with Frederick the Great. A thousand instances might be adduced of this elegant intercourse between the great and the wise, the illustrious and the

learned, the noble and the wit. In such a condition of society, intellectual civilization rapidly proceeds. Then, indeed, science, literature, and the arts, shine forth in all their splendour; then, indeed, great ideas take possession of the human mind; then, indeed, the treasures from the ocean depths of philosophy and science are gathered and brought up to light. Society rejoices in this exuberance of mental wealth, this abundance of intellectual riches. History recognises such a period in a nation's career, as an epoch of civilization. Posterity ratifies the claim. The age of Sophocles and Euripides, of Socrates and Plato, produced a civilization far more elegant and refined, than did the age of Solon. No one can doubt, but that the Rome of Augustus was more richly civilized, than the Rome of Scipio. No one can doubt, but that the France of Louis XIV. was incomparably more intellectual, than the France of Louis XI. No one can doubt, but that England, under the House of Hanover, has far surpassed the England of the Plantagenets. Nevertheless, there are limits to the progress of every human institution; there is a point, beyond which, civilization has never yet been able to pass, without shewing a visible decline in the brilliancy of its lustre. Every one is familiar with the ruin of Carthage, and the decline of Rome. Notwithstanding the grandeur of their empire, the genius of their people, they perished; and shall not other nations, equally ennobled and exalted, follow in their track? "The history of the world," says Gibbon, "contains one perpetual round—valour, greatness, discord, degene-

racy, and decline." Who can contemplate the present position of France or England, without perceiving that the age of discord has arrived—that evil principles are on the eve of prevailing—that civilization is threatened with destruction ?

"Those Suns of Empire, where they rise they set."

Wherever any society of human beings can show a marked improvement in their social condition, or in the relations which they bear towards one another, there we recognise and proclaim civilization to be advancing ; but since a wide difference exists between moral and material civilization, it is highly requisite to ascertain that a society is progressing in this double aspect, before we too hastily pronounce the development of civilization in such a society to be a fact. The social condition of the nations of Western Europe, at the present time, strikingly exemplifies the necessity of observing this important distinction. No one can deny, but that the inferior population of these densely-populated communities, enjoy the opportunity of acquiring greater comforts and advantages, than they did half a century ago. All legislation, latterly, has expressly aimed to produce this amelioration. One demand is succeeded by another. Before one concession is hardly granted, another is required. The necessities of life are cheapened ; the cost of travelling and postal communication are reduced ; the burdens of taxation upon the poor are lightened, those upon the rich increase. Every measure which can tend to render the material existence of the working classes happy is adopted. Sanitary regulations are

enforced, to make their dwellings more comfortable, at the expense of the owner. The proprietor of landed estates is compelled to fell his timber, diminish his hedge-rows, and exterminate his game, in order that a larger breadth of arable soil may be brought under the efficient cultivation of the plough. The laws which favour the principle of primogeniture and entail are gradually abrogated. Territorial property becomes more and more divided. Family is abolished. In England, poor-law relief is granted upon a most liberal scale. In Germany and France, wayside charity is dispensed with an equal munificence. All improvements, effected in the condition of the people by new legislative enactments, are especially designed for the benefit of the million; and whatever interferes in the least degree with their comforts, is immediately sacrificed, even though its existence should be ever so essential to the higher purposes of intellectual civilization. If the most splendid monument of art, impeded the course of a "main sewer," it would be broken down, and the fragments used as materials in building the sewer, without the slightest hesitation on the part of the "authorities." What are statues or monuments in comparison with the welfare of the million? All this tender solicitude for the interest of the working classes, would be highly commendable and judicious, if they reciprocally proved themselves worthy of the philanthropic benevolence bestowed upon them, by evincing an increasing disposition for industry, and a more provident thrift; but the reverse is unfortunately the result, for in the large manufac-

turing populations of the commercial cities in England and France, crowds of human beings may be found grovelling amidst the lowest depths of misery and degradation, of infamy and crime. Even supposing that these efforts for the amelioration of the poor were attended with success, it is surely to reduce the ambition of the human mind within the limits of a very narrow circle. The accomplishment of material civilization, occupies, at best, but a very humble part in the labours of the human intellect. What then is society in England and France now attempting to achieve? Socialism by legislation. The material improvement of the masses at the expense of the possessors of wealth, at the expense of real intellectual civilization, and failing in the project. This is no flattering prospect.

Everything plainly indicates that the direction of society in England and France, is unalterably turned towards a complete equality of social condition ; and this equality must inevitably destroy intellectual civilization, for the two facts cannot co-exist, cannot occupy the same place. In tracing the progress of European society, after it had emerged from barbarism, we perceive at once, that inequality of condition was evidently the original type it assumed. The disparity between the possessor of territorial power, and the serf or villein of the inferior population, was immeasurably great. The principle of government was that of hereditary right. Whoever possessed the soil, possessed the right to govern all its inhabitants. They were considered his property just as much as the deer

in his forest, or any other animal upon his domain. Inheritance was the dominant fact. Power, privilege, property, all alike passed from generation to generation by inheritance. Election was almost unknown. In the lapse of time, this striking inequality of condition between man and man, became, by a variety of circumstances, gradually broken down, and divested of its harshness and injustice, until at length only a sufficient portion remained to establish and maintain the true liberty of society. In every successive struggle which has convulsed European society, this inequality will be found to have been slowly yielding to an equality of social condition. However powerful and stable inequality might have appeared at particular epochs, we observe upon closely investigating historical facts, that it is more and more upon the decline. Every century affords some evidence that the equality of social condition is gaining ground upon the inequality of social condition. All the great changes accomplished, have turned to the advantage of equality—none to that of inequality. The Crusades, by impoverishing the feudal nobility, and enriching the burgher population, favoured the rise and progress of municipal freedom. The towns became independent municipalities. The corporations of the middle ages led to the establishment of the Third Estate. Royalty began to confer titles of nobility. Nobility could thus be created, as well as inherited. The invention of the compass caused a subsequent developement of navigation and commerce. The financier, the merchant, and the trader, rose into importance. The legists, or the

noblesse of the robe, grew up beside the noblesse of the sword. The Parliaments began to enjoy a share of power. The Commons were definitely established. The discovery of gunpowder placed the yeoman and the peasant upon equal ground with the mail-clad baron, and the vizored knight. The introduction of luxuries impoverished the opulent, and enriched the poor. The precious metals of the New World placed wealth within the reach of the merchants of the Old World, and opened a thousand avenues to advancement in the shape of commerce and adventure. The Printing Press favoured the diffusion of knowledge amongst all classes; it afforded a channel for the expression of public opinion; it enabled intellect to contend with brute force. The Reformation gave the first rude shock to absolute power—it was the cradle of Democracy, the birth-place of the Puritan and the Jacobin. The French Revolution of the eighteenth century laid the axe at the root of all privileged ranks, and hereditary power. Nothing survived the desolating fury of its course. The emancipation of the North American colonies coloured Rebellion with a gloss of triumph; whilst the universal application of steam, to the purposes of mechanical art, has favoured the expansion of democracy, and tended to bring all classes to one common level. Thus, Royalty, Rank, Privilege, Birth, Title, and Distinction, have all been mowed down by the Scythe of the Destroyer. Intellect and Property—the *litterateur* and the *bourgeois*, yet survive, but they survive only to share the same fate. Girondins, they will perish by the will of that

fierce democracy they have flattered and encouraged. The Power which has cast down thrones, and trampled a proud nobility to dust, is not likely to halt when approaching the ranks of such puny adversaries, as the capitalist and the man of letters. The stream of European civilization, after sweeping over the broken rock and the rugged precipice of Inequality, now enters the wide and spacious channel of Equality, before losing itself upon the ocean of Barbarism and Ruin.

In France, without question, aristocracy was the primitive element which gave a form and shape to society, when civilization emerged from the chaotic barbarism of the ninth and tenth centuries. Let us enumerate the rivals which successively arose to dispute its supremacy and share its success. The church was the first institution which dared to penetrate within the sacred circle of hereditary territorial power. The clergy, chosen by free election from all ranks and conditions of men, from that of the villein, as well as that of the lord, aspired to participate in the political influence which had hitherto been jealously confined to aristocracy alone. They succeeded: the priest took his place beside the noble in the councils and tribunals of the feudal courts. Royalty next entered the arena to challenge aristocracy—a champion of the people, it asserted their rights and vanquished their oppressors. The feudal barons at length stood humbled and subdued in the presence of royalty. Originally, the nobles had made kings. In the progress of time, the kings made nobles. In the place of the daring independence of the feudal peer, there followed the

loyal and subservient obedience of the ennobled courtier. The inferior classes of society, such as the merchants and financiers, acquiring wealth, by the transactions of agriculture and commerce, while the monarchs and the nobles were wasting their own resources in private feuds, or romantic enterprise, next asserted their claims to political power, by demanding a recognition of their authority in the fiscal departments of the government. They required royalty to obtain their sanction, before taxation could be levied or enforced. They also succeeded. The commons and the nobles met in the chambers of legislation, but the Tiers Etat knelt, while the clergy and the noblesse were allowed to stand uncovered in the presence of royalty. So humble and obedient was democracy in the infancy of its career. Thus, four elements—royalty and the church, aristocracy and democracy, have each aspired to obtain the sole dominion over society, or such a marked pre-eminence as to keep their rivals in subjection; and it is from the conflict and attrition produced by the rivalry of these antagonistic elements, in their struggles to attain supreme power, that European civilization has taken so high, so intellectual, and so polished a type.

Although the general civilization of the world is not uniformly progressive in its march, although an increased perfection is not plainly visible at the expiration of every cycle in the flight of Time, although, upon our taking a comprehensive view over the whole expanse of historical research, we can point out particular periods when nations and communities,

once peculiarly distinguished by the brilliancy of their civilization, have since been blotted from the face of the earth, or have sunk into a state of lethargic immobility and supine monotony, yet, notwithstanding all this, the general civilization of the world is, without question, in the aggregate, steadily upon the increase. If the observer look back a century, retrogression may be evident; if he look back ten, a marked improvement will be discernible; and plainly so, because the existing materials of all former civilizations are continually augmenting in amount; and, thus, the vast storehouse of the world's knowledge is perpetually hoarding within its walls the labours of all preceding time. Egypt and Phœnicia, Greece and Rome, each attained a wonderful developement and perfection in their civilization, but they cannot for a moment vie with that of modern Italy, of England, or of France. These nations, also, may decline, and exhibit to future ages a melancholy picture of fallen grandeur and sublime ruin. In their cities desolation may reign, and the column and the arch moulder in decay. Their fields may become a desert waste, and upon their plains the barbarian may once more dwell, and the savage fix his tent; but other empires will spring up to carry out and perfect the great work of civilization, which, for aught we know, is hardly yet begun.

In nearly all the civilizations of remote antiquity, it may be observed that unity was the predominant fact; hence, the short-lived duration of their career, their tendency to fall into a state of monotony and torpor, the rapidity of their exhaustion and decay.

One principle alone held possession of society ; it encountered no opposition for it admitted no rival. Whatever rose up to challenge this preponderating principle was at once exterminated and destroyed. Without emulation, rivalry, and competition, there can be no success. Civilizations of this kind produce nothing striking, because the full powers of the human mind are never brought into action. Such were the theocratic governments of Egypt, the commercial democracies of Asia Minor, the castes of India, and the despotism of China. A strong central tyranny above, and universal slavery below. But, in analysing the history of modern civilization, we invariably perceive that wherever the antagonism of rival principles has been the most completely established, success has also been the most apparent and the most permanent. A variety of elements have struggled to obtain the mastery, yet none have been sufficiently powerful to exterminate their rivals. This is the cause of the lengthened career which European civilization has already run, of its astonishing energy, of its marvellous refinement, of its profound results. This is the fact which has produced that marked developement of freedom and liberty, which the nations of antiquity could never attain. Examine European history for the last eight centuries, and it would be difficult to point out a period when a particular element or principle enjoyed the sole and undisturbed possession of society. Rivals were always at hand, always ready to take advantage, to encroach upon the preponderant principle. If royalty aspired

to become absolute or despotic, nobles or commons were present to check such pretensions, or to modify them when established. If aristocracy attempted to set up an oligarchy upon a narrow and exclusive basis, the influence of the Third Estate was sufficient to defeat such a purpose. If the church ambitiously struggled to bring all temporal as well as spiritual authority under her dominion, kings and nobles were found ready to prevent such encroachments and usurpations. If the popular element broke forth in wild and turbulent excesses, the nobles, the church, and the monarchical power, were enabled by combining to arrest its lawless march. Hence, the elementary principles of European society have always been taught to regard each other with feelings of perpetual jealousy and concern—a circumstance which has invariably turned to the advantage of civilization, by keeping alive the virtues of rivalry and competition. Even when the different elements have been placed in a state of happy equilibrium and harmonious apposition, as regards political power, they have striven with zealous emulation to attain the high position of intellectual supremacy. Each principle has found energetic, daring, and able advocates, eager to support its opinions and defend its doctrines. Each principle can boast of its heroes and its martyrs, can recount its glories, and remember its triumphs. Thus, various systems and polities have contended against, and modified one another, neither of them wholly predominating to the exclusion of the rest; and it is to the diversity of ideas, of sentiments, of interests, and

of character, developed in the collision between the champions of these antagonistic principles, that European society is indebted for its peculiar vigour and its enduring splendour, its brilliant lustre and its imperishable renown.

The rapid progress which equality of social condition has made during the last few years among the nations of Western Europe, is now too palpable for any but the most superficial observers to remain blind to the fact. In truth, democracy may be said to have gained the vantage ground over its ancient rivals, although some of them still remain upon the field of battle, in the anticipation that a re-actionary struggle may once more turn back the tide of conquest to their advantage. The many have defeated the few. The combination of numbers has at length overwhelmed the more compact organization of property and intellect. In the place of classes and interests which once represented, or were in the abstract synonymous with, intelligence and industry, equality of social condition, and equality of political power, are now rapidly becoming an universal fact. Influence now depends more upon the number of heads than their contents. The fool stands upon the same level as the wit, only that the former has the larger audience. In France, these changes are actually accomplished. All ranks, honours, and distinctions, are virtually abolished. One citizen, however distinguished may be his natural or acquired qualifications, is considered with hardly more esteem than another, who is, perhaps, equally distinguished for dullness and stupidity. Only the other

day, a carman, who could neither read or write, was elected a member of the National Assembly, in preference to a statesman who had filled the office of premier under the late dynasty, and who has written one of the most luminous historical works of the day. A Minister for Public Instruction declared ignorance to be a desirable qualification in legislators. Serjeants of a marching regiment were elected to make laws they never intended to obey. And such a chaotic state of society is solemnly pronounced to be the triumph of the new philosophy—the march of civilization—the progress of intelligence. Is this the result of the boasted diffusion of knowledge? Is this the work which the schoolmaster has gone abroad to accomplish? Is this the way in which the rights of man are better understood? Is this the liberty which has so long been hidden and concealed? Is this the enlightened future which has so often been prophesied and foretold? Is this the millennium of reason which so many have anticipated, as the crowning glory of their lives? But we forget that we live in an age when rebellion is taught as a science in the schools, when treason is inculcated as one of the first and noblest of the social duties.

In England, the transformation of the body politic into a democracy, is more gradual, as well as more decorously veiled than it is in France, but it is, assuredly, both real and progressive. Every year brings the chariot-wheel of privilege nearer to the precipice of destruction. Every year shows, that the wave of democratic ambition has encroached upon the

stronghold of hereditary power, and swept something away from the original fabric. It is true, that a Monarchy, an Episcopacy, and a House of Lords, still exist, but they exist only by sufferance, only by bending patiently to the decrees of platform agitators, and shaping their course according to the dictates of turbulent, but ignorant mobs. The Monarchy is styled a limited one, and nobody will question the propriety of that term. As to the actual influence of the peers in legislation, they have become a perfect nullity, and the utmost authority they now enjoy, is the privilege of rejecting, once in twelve months, a Dogs' Cart Bill, or a statute to regulate the height of a factory chimney. The very palace which has been built for their reception is, in reality, but a splendid tomb for their interment. Few persons, at the present day, would desire to see the preponderating political power of the state revert to the Upper House, because the period, eligible for an oligarchical form of government has passed away. Every one, even the aristocracy themselves, are willing to admit that the middle classes of society are sufficiently educated to be entrusted with the principal voice in public affairs; but there is a wide distinction between a Third Estate composed of gentlemen, of scholars, of merchants, and of traders, who can approach the subject of legislation with comprehensive erudition, discerning judgment, and temperate argument, and a Third Estate, which consists of delegates, bound hand and foot to the dictation of some popular demagogue, and who never act in earnest, unless they are engaged in the work of demo-

lition and ruin. When the views entertained by a majority of the intelligent portion of the community, are expressed as favourable to any particular measure, their voice is generally sufficient to carry the desired point ; but this kind of public opinion is widely different from that new species of political power, known as the "pressure from without," which is nothing more or less than a threatened substitution of the club-stick and the musket in the place of argument and reason. England is professedly governed by a Queen, Lords, and Commons, but really governed by a handful of cotton-spinners, who wield the force of democracy and turn it to their own advantage. All the paraphernalia forms, and ceremonies of courts and senates are retained, but the breath, the spirit, the animating principle of Parliaments is gone. Independence of mind can be no longer said to exist, where the members of a legislature are constantly voting against their own conscientious convictions, under the influence of intimidation. The ministry of the day, of whatever party composed, follow, like slaves, behind the triumphal procession of democratic agitation, ready to grant whatever is demanded, although at the frequent sacrifice of their own opinions. Take, for example, the proposed enlargement of the Elective Franchise. Does any one believe, that the Cabinet are impressed with the idea that education has recently made such rapid progress amongst the lower classes of society, as to warrant the admission of the additional number, by the expanded suffrage now in contemplation ? No ! the measure is a sop to appease

the Cerberus of agitation—a concession to mob orators, and reform associations; but, like all concessions of a weaker to a stronger party, it will be followed by more extravagant demands on the part of the latter. The workshops of democracy will never be closed again till their purpose is fulfilled. Nothing can be more fruitless than the attempt to persuade any dispassionate observer, that the whole mass of society are sufficiently instructed, to be entitled to a participation in the regulation of political government. If such a monstrous experiment were tried in England, (and we doubt not but that it will be before long) a sound government, admitting of considerable liberty to the subject, would be exchanged for a miserable anarchy, or a detestable tyranny, similar to those paper constitutions, which, for the last sixty years, have been the torment and the curse of France. What can be expected but oppression and misrule, if equal political power is entrusted to a male population, of whom two-fifths can only sign their name with “a mark,” and in the majority of whom the very rudiments of knowledge are wanting? If the working classes were as intelligent as they are represented to be by their professional advocates, who travel the circuits of political agitation, we should have some faith in the “real parliaments” they are so anxious to establish; but, since the schoolmaster has clearly made such slight progress in his vocation, most persons, who have any pretensions to common sense, will prefer “the ancient parliaments” of Westminster, to the “real parliaments of Manchester,” until stronger evidence can be ad-

duced to prove the superiority of the latter over those of the former. The government of England has been for the last century an educated democracy, tempered by the presence of a privileged aristocracy ; but the constitution is now rapidly becoming converted into an ignorant, intractable democracy, unchecked by any counterbalancing authority to rebuke the insane presumption, or to limit the reckless ambition of its turbulent leaders. Indeed, so completely has the municipal triumphed over the territorial element, that the large cities are enabled, by the facilities they possess of organizing and combining their forces, to defy the more diffused population of the rural districts, although the latter are, perhaps, frequently as numerically powerful as their opponents. Nothing can be so unfavourable to the growth of liberty, and so destructive to the higher purposes of civilization, as the uncurbed ascendancy of a widespread and uncultivated democracy, which has its centralization of power culminating in a few needy and selfish adventurers. In such a condition of society, patriotism may be often promised, but it will be seldom practised ; freedom may be often mentioned, but it will be rarely enjoyed.

The triumph of social democracy upon the stage of European politics, we regard as ultimately inevitable ; all that can be hoped is to procrastinate the evil day, and thus ward off barbarism for a few generations more. We do not, for an instant, imagine that all ideas of arresting the march of democracy will be henceforth abandoned, and that the long cherished

honours of titled rank and political power will be tacitly surrendered by their present possessors without a struggle, but we do believe that the victory will eventually lay with the democratic party, however formidable or well-organized may be the forces of those who will perish in defending the fortress of ancient power, rather than behold their time-worn banners degraded by an ignominious and ignoble defeat. However hopeless may be the cause of privilege, it will have its Falklands and Montroses, its Maurys and Cazales. Such a cause will never want for loyalists and cavaliers to support its standards, although the reverses of a Naseby and La Vendée may be its fate.

The advent of social democracy in Europe, will be regarded in a different light by three parties. First, the large majority of the people will everywhere demand and accept it, with the idea that their social condition will be sensibly ameliorated by the change; and in proportion as over-population increases the want and destitution of the working classes, so will the numbers of this formidable multitude expand. Headed by clamorous or artful demagogues, and brutalised by constant indulgence in sensual passions, the lower orders will advance with fearful energy and uncontrollable force to accomplish their terrible mission of destruction. Secondly, there will be a considerable phalanx who will offer a most unhesitating and undying opposition to the progress of democracy, who will listen to no compromise, and yield to no surrender. These people hate the social democracy from the

bottom of their hearts ; their faith is far away, and to the last moment of their existence they will battle for the creeds in which they believe. Nothing will shake their unalterable fidelity, nothing will weaken their inflexible adherence to that cause, which they regard as the alpha and the omega of loyalty, of honour, and of virtue. Such are the present Legitimists of France, such will be the patrician orders of English society a few years hence. Many generations must pass away before the deep-laid, the inextinguishable principles of such men, can be obliterated and forgotten—

“ For loyalty is still the same,
Whether it win or lose the game ;
True as the dial to the sun,
Although it be not shined upon.”

Thirdly, many intelligent persons of the upper and middle classes of society, although not possessing the slightest predilection for democracy, will, when they perceive the change towards equality of social condition inevitable, attempt to guide that which cannot be obviated or turned aside. From feelings of self-interest, from a high sense of duty, and from genuine patriotism, they will endeavour to instruct and elevate the masses, so that political institutions may be framed in accordance with the spirit of the democratic principle. Such are the *modérés* of France, and the leaders of the *juste milieu* of English politics. It will, however, be no light task to purify and regulate democracy, or to keep its passions within the channels of public order, by placing them under the sway of superior intellect ; and even if such a duty can be performed, society, when truly democratic, will always be in

danger of despotism from centralization above, or of barbarism from licentiousness below.

M. de Tocqueville, whose reputation as a political writer is so unrivalled, entertains an opinion, that the lower orders of society, in all the European nations, will ultimately become sufficiently enlightened, not only to admit of democratic institutions being established for their political government, but actually to require them. We do not share in these anticipations of a transcendental and Arcadian future, neither do we believe that moral civilization will receive its highest finish and most perfect developement in the democratic age; but, of this we are certain, that in the present condition of the inferior populations of England and France, as regards elementary knowledge, or even common sense, a social democracy, admitting equality of political power, is fraught with the greatest and most imminent peril. To prevent democracy from seizing too rapidly upon society, appears, to our view, the most urgent duty which can engage the minds of those who desire to preserve intellectual civilization from immediate destruction. And to accomplish this purpose, a compact and watchful organization of the educated classes is absolutely essential; for if they divide their forces, or waver upon unimportant questions, the masses will at once rush in and gain possession of the citadel of power. It was the jealousy and disunion existing between the leaders of political parties in France, respecting dynastic interests, which gave an opportunity for the plebeian victory of February. In the serious party divisions

which now agitate and distract the intelligent classes of English society, a similar breach will be formed for a successful invasion of the democratic force, unless a more complete unity can be re-established. The enemy are at the gate; it is only by unanimity, that the fortress can be saved from the Vandal and the Goth.

Although the social democracy is not yet veritably established to its full extent, either in England or France, still sufficient progress towards such a consummation has already been made, to produce a marked and visible decline in their intellectual civilization. Upon taking a rapid survey of European history, we shall perceive that, during the middle ages, royalty, aristocracy, and the papacy, maintained a most injurious preponderance of power, over the democratic element—if, indeed, such a principle could then be scarcely said to exist. So tyrannical and oppressive were the restraints with which these institutions, in the absence of democracy as an antagonist, circumscribed the freedom of the human mind, that the progress of moral civilization was seriously retarded and delayed. Intellect lay chained and pining in the dungeons of obscurity and servitude. Force, consequent upon skill and prowess in martial dexterity, was the predominant fact. Every one was either noble or *roturier*, privileged or enslaved. Civilization was intrinsically material. Passing to the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, we observe democracy gradually assuming a just position, and elevating itself to the rank of a rival amongst the other elements of

society. The Reformation—the discovery of printing—the increase of commerce—the English Revolutions of the seventeenth century, and a variety of other circumstances, combined to unshackle intellect from the bondage of superstition, slavery, and misrule, to the manifest advantage of social improvement. At the expiration of each succeeding century, intellectual civilization became more costly and refined. Genius sprang up from every source—from the church, from the throne, from the nobles, from the people; but of whatever rank or condition it was recognised and rewarded, it was elevated and honoured. The distinctions of rank, the precedences of privilege were rigidly preserved and universally esteemed. Every one desired to ascend, to aspire, to excel. Emulation led the mind to excellence. Honour dignified and ennobled its actions. All the rival principles of society were balanced and antagonised; none predominated to the exclusion of the rest. Freedom of opinion was established. Liberty, no longer an empty word, became a fact. Intellectual civilization attained the meridian zenith of its course. In the nineteenth century, democracy has at length obtained too signal a pre-eminence over its ancient rivals; and in proportion as they pass off from the arena of competition, so will society become torpid and apathetic. Knowledge may perhaps, for a season, be more universally diffused, but genius will become more and more rare. A desire to possess riches will supersede the passion for those honours and distinctions, which were once like precious jewels, beyond price. Ambition will be

replaced by avarice. The very springs of enterprise will be dried up, except for the mean and vulgar purpose of commercial barter. In such a corrupt and vitiated state of society, everything will bear a market price; even honour will be valued and trafficked with; all chivalry of character will be ridiculed, and generosity of feeling sink to the obscurity of an obsolete and a degraded virtue. Equality will beget mediocrity; mediocrity will slowly degenerate into ignorance and barbarism. Civilization will again become material. As the earth retains the warmth of the sun long after the last rays of the setting orb fade from the surface of the horizon, so will society for a time enjoy the benefits of intellectual civilization, even when the sources of that civilization are no longer visible or existing.

A densely-populated nation, exercising political power through the medium of democratic institutions, is, perhaps, of all others, the most barren soil which can be selected for the growth of intellectual civilization. In such a community, equality of social condition benumbs and paralyses every faculty of the mind. No one aspires to be distinguished, because personal distinction is incompatible with the first principles upon which the foundations of democratic society are laid. This mental apathy begets monotony and uniformity. Personal energy is wholly wanting. Self-dependence is seldom observable. Every work society proposes to accomplish, is effected by numbers instead of by individuals. Each member in such a state of society, feels himself personally powerless. He is but one of

the many—an atom in the infinity of human beings that surround him. The result of this eternal and unvarying equality, is, that the citizens of a democratic community, are utterly deficient in strength, energy, or originality of mind; and when the individual parts of a society are weak, these parts when aggregated into a state, are weak also. If we cast our eyes upon that microcosm of democracy, the United States of America, the truth of these observations will be amply verified. Nearly two centuries have now elapsed since the primitive colonists left their native land, to gratify those democratic and puritanical sympathies in the New World, for which the Old World could then afford neither a resting place, nor a permanent home. If democracy be the most advantageous form in which society can be moulded to facilitate the progress of civilization, why has the failure in this respect been so signal with America? Nothing, apparently, could be more favourable than the circumstances which attended the developement of democracy in American society, inasmuch as there were neither ancient monarchical institutions, or uneradicable prejudices to interfere with its growth, and retard its expansion. The ground was entirely new. Society was free from the dangers of political reaction, from threatened restorations, as well as from all the vicissitudes and perils, ever attendant upon the fall of principles which have flourished and existed for a lapse of ages. There were neither kings to be restored, dynasties to be replaced, or nobilities to be reinstated. There were no exiled Bourbons to return, no expatriated Stuarts to be re-

called. There were neither Royalists to plot, nor Legitimists to rebel. Yet what has democracy accomplished for the advance of civilization in America? Has it produced great statesmen or impassioned orators? Has it produced unrivalled artists or sublime poets? Has it produced erudite scholars or profound logicians? Nothing of the kind. Has it added any wonderful discovery or marvellous improvement to the volumes of scientific research? Has it, during any half century of its existence in that country, displayed one-third of the intellectual ability which has been shown by a similar numerical amount of population in England and France? Nothing of the kind. Why even Scotland, with all her disadvantages of adverse climate and sterility of soil, has far surpassed the United States in producing men of superior genius. Subtract twenty names from the whole historical career of American civilization, and what materials are left behind. Subtract Washington alone, and what remains but a few common place minds, hardly worthy to be ranked with the second class celebrities of European talent. Yet America is now the model upon which the nations of Western Europe are seeking to recast the type of society, in the vain hope that such a regeneration will elevate European civilization to a higher pinnacle of grandeur and refinement, than it has ever yet attained. To our view, American democracy should be held up as an example to be shunned, rather than imitated; it should rather serve as a warning to the European nations, to remain content with their mixed and balanced constitutions,

instead of panting after ideal and visionary theories, which can only lead to misery and ruin. The unity of civilization, arising from the complete predominance of democracy, is the bane of intellectual progress in America; and if the detestable doctrine of social equality be transplanted to the European soil, a marked retrogression of moral civilization, will speedily become discernible there also.

When democracy usurps the complete possession of a society, which has hitherto been divided into widely diversified gradations of social rank, it has an invariable tendency to fuse down the component parts of such a community, into one vast and comprehensive middle class. The higher and privileged orders disappear; the lower orders slightly improve, in reference to their material condition. This transition from a great inequality to a comparative equality of rank and wealth, when concluded, produces a state of society incompatible with the existence of an elegant and refined intellectual civilization. Such a society would no longer be divided into two classes—the one, rich, polite, and highly educated, enjoying the opportunities of opulence and leisure, to cultivate the higher purposes of moral civilization; the other, ignorant, devoted to the mechanical pursuits of labour, easily controlled and satisfied with the enjoyments of sensual pleasure; but the whole fabric of social rank would be melted down to one common level of equality, and its present diversities effaced. We have visible evidence that this transformation is rapidly proceeding in Europe. Courts and thrones are one by one obliterated

and overthrown. Kings and nobles are declared to be of no more importance to society than clowns or boors. Privileged orders are exiled and degraded. The respect for superiority of intellect is sensibly diminished. Gentlemen, who could once afford to maintain an honourable immunity from the drudgery of business, are compelled to cultivate their own estates. The landlord sinks to the condition of a farmer—the farmer becomes a labourer; even the retired merchant is driven back to calculate his profit and loss in the exchange. Every one is obliged to fall into the ranks of servitude, and adopt some means to obtain a livelihood. Such is the present condition of French society—such will be that of England a few generations hence. The ardent advocates, the admirers of the democratic principle, point to these facts with exultation and delight. They will tell you, it is better that intellectual civilization should retrograde, that “the great lights of the world” should be extinguished, than that the lower orders of society should want for the common necessities of life; and it would be difficult to controvert this assertion, if the unsound social philanthropy of the present day can be proved wholesome and correct. But although such Communitistic doctrines are built upon a base of sand, and will not bear a breath of argument, yet many estimable persons, from humane and charitable motives, voluntarily put them into practice. A proprietor of a large landed estate might be morally justified in giving commissions to artists, to furnish him with a gallery of paintings, although a hundred paupers were almost in

a starving condition at the gate of his mansion ; yet few people, to the credit of humanity, will be found to carry out and enforce such harsh principles. The majority would forego the purchase of the paintings, and grant relief to the indigent peasantry upon their estate. Thus, owing to the spontaneous generosity of human nature, the existence of a superabundant inferior population, in a needy and destitute condition, materially obstructs the march of intellectual civilization, as well as indirectly favours the advance of social democracy.

The genius of an age, for the most part, represents and embodies the ideas and opinions of that particular age ; for the genius of an age is a mirror that reflects to posterity the thoughts and the tastes which prevailed at the time it enjoyed existence. Hence, whenever we observe an historical epoch richly studied with great writers, or brilliant artists, we may conclude, that the community which produced these writers, contained men who could comprehend and applaud them, who sympathised with their views and rejoiced in their success. Hence, the current literature of a nation, for the most part, exhibits the current opinions and talents of its people. In a society where there is an aristocratic tendency, and consequently a highly-educated, as well as exquisite, taste, the artist, in whatever capacity he labour, will endeavour to produce a work adapted to the taste he seeks to gratify. In a society where there is a democratic tendency, and consequently an imperfect, or half-developed taste, the artist will seek to fashion his productions so as to suit

the understandings and the faculties of the people he is called upon to address. Where society assumes an aristocratic type, a man of letters imbibes its prejudices and partakes its sentiments ; he is corrected by its taste, refined by its elegance, and taught to share its pride. When society assumes a democratic type, he attempts to fall in with its tendencies, to adopt its tastes, to nourish its presumption, to compromise with its errors, and to flatter its vulgarities. In the one instance, he cultivates literature or the arts as an honour and a distinction, in the other, as a traffic and a trade.

The present transition state of European society towards democracy, is already visibly depicted in the altered nature of its public opinion. Whoever advances the material civilization of the age, meets with a far higher degree of consideration and esteem than those who attempt to elevate its intellectual tastes. A man who can invent a machine to turn cotton-twist to cotton shirts by thousands in as many minutes, or who can make bread stuffs as plentiful as blackberries, is worshipped as an idol and a god. Everybody rushes to prostrate themselves before the modern Juggernaut. An abundant supply of food and clothing for the million is now the one thing needful ; therefore, whoever steps forward to supply this desideratum, and satisfy these primal wants of human nature, receives the favour and applause of the multitude. The age of chivalry is replaced by the age of cheapness ; and the only way to be a hero now, is to send in the lowest tender. All business is now transacted by what is

technically termed "the bargain;" even sermons are preached "by contract," and the seats of churches let out like the stalls of an opera. A Raphael or a Correggio might beg their way in abject poverty through the cities of a nation, the people of which would subscribe their thousands and tens of thousands to men, whose great merit consists in cheating their friends, and making them believe that it is all for their advantage. To procure the greatest possible comfort for the greatest possible number, being the economic doctrine of the day, whoever bullies a minister or frightens a legislature to accomplish a little social distribution of the worldly goods of the rich, is styled the master spirit of the age. A sedulous attention to the wants and conveniences of the working classes, may be very laudable and meritorious in its way, but it is a farce to call such improvements as a few cheapened commodities, or a reduced tariff, the progress of intellectual civilization, when the cost at which they have been acquired has sensibly diminished those resources from whence all high and permanent intellectual civilization must ever take its rise.

The prevailing idea of the present age is the substitution of quantity for quality; a dogma invented by the political economists, to throw a veil over the miseries arising from over-population. This principle, although it may be successfully applied in the manufacture of hats and coats, leads to very deplorable results when employed in the cultivation of science and art. Literature, say the economists, no longer requires a patron, since it has found a public. The

task of rewarding genius is now performed by the community at large, instead of by individual classes. At first sight this plausible doctrine seems worthy of consideration, but the more closely we observe its results, when practically adopted, the more dangerous and destructive will it appear. A system of patronage founded upon this pernicious maxim, strikes a death-blow at the very root of all high intellectual civilization; and plainly so, because the great mass of society never can be sufficiently instructed and improved in taste to enjoy or criticise the highest works of art, a pleasure and a duty which must always devolve upon the chosen few. Wherever such an unwholesome precept is obeyed by society, a striking deterioration in the character of its literature and art soon becomes perceptible. The workman descends at once to the level of his employers, and finding his ancient patrons the rich, the noble, and the great, removed from the scene, proceeds to warp and bend his talent in order to gain the approval of the "people." He no longer labours to please those whom it is a merit and a pleasure to please, but rests satisfied with that vague and indiscriminate glory which is known by the name of public favour. Instead of devoting himself to some abstruse study, or laborious composition, which would be applauded by a circle of highly-educated savans and accomplished critics, he produces some transitory and ephemeral work of art, to gratify the curiosity and impatience of the crowd. Required by the riches flowing in from this easy exercise of his talents, he ceases to track out those arduous paths of

enquiry which require him "to scorn delights and live laborious days," or burn the midnight oil of patience and research. In a word, the artist exchanges glory for wealth; society obtains mediocrity in the place of genius.

Democracy, wherever established, exerts a direct influence in producing a fleeting and evanescent species of literature. A people who are universally engaged in the fatigues of political office, or the wearisome toils of mercantile business, cannot be expected to spend the short span of leisure allotted for their recreation in poring over abstruse commentaries, or diving into the profound depths of metaphysical speculation. They require something to please them for the hour, without demanding any severe or continued mental exertion; hence, in a society purely democratic, the journal and the novel are in constant request, whilst the more serious works of science are thrown aside; and, hence, in proportion as taste becomes vitiated and corrupt, owing to the want of leisure for its proper education, the standard of literature and the arts becomes perceptibly lowered. In France, this remarkable change in the character of her intellectual civilization is daily appearing more and more visible; the most learned scholars no longer reserve their powers to build up some durable and elaborate work for posterity, but fritter away their abilities in pamphlets and newspapers, to gratify the restless dispositions and the excitable passions of a crowd who are always thirsting for novelties or gaping for wonders. Even the higher branches of art, such

as sculpture, poetry, and painting, no longer receive that encouragement which is necessary to foster and keep alive the taste for such delicate studies. The artist, instead of labouring upon a work that might leave him the rival fame of a Canova, or a Claude, sketches caricatures for the Charivari, or cuts engravings for an Art Union. The poet and the historian, instead of writing "for all time," content themselves with filling the pages of a Souvenir, or scribbling novels for a circulating library. Whatever is accomplished in the fine arts, is ephemeral in its nature. Every one is intent upon the present; and hence, nothing in the shape of deliberate science or well-matured art is attempted. Action and bustle are more observable than quietude and meditation; thought is never long fixed upon a single object; hence, the works of the artist are too often indicative of the chaotic society in which his lot has been cast. One institution alone floats secure amidst the deluge of anarchy and the troubled waters of revolution. Within the walls of the French Academy may still be heard the last and lingering echoes of that brilliant civilization, which, despised as it may be by "this enlightened age," has played no mean or insignificant part in promoting the intellectual improvement of mankind. Into this sacred sanctuary of genius, true taste has at length retired for shelter from the vulgar taunts of democratic audacity; and the eloquent eulogium which a Duc de Noailles could here pronounce upon the memory of the illustrious Chateaubriand, proves that nobility of mind may still survive, when privilege is

extinct, and the distinctions of rank and title are but as a tinkling cymbal and an empty sound.

The utilitarian principle makes daily progress in ravaging the fields of philosophy and science ; nothing is spared from the violence of the destructive torrent, and often the very spots, that might be deemed the most secure, are the first to disappear beneath the flood of devastation and ruin. Every one who does not possess wealth or high position in society, entertains a jealous hatred against those who have been nursed upon the lap of fortune, or who have risen to prosperity and power by their own ability ; and from this despicable spirit of malicious envy originates that passion for equality of social condition, which has loosened the very foundations of all civilized society. Like the soldier, who broke the precious vase at Soissons, which Clovis wished to preserve, each individual usurps the power to destroy by violence, that which he cannot claim by right. Whatever exists now must have its use, must contribute directly to the material welfare of the masses, to the comforts, the luxuries, and the gratifications of the many. We have no longer room to spare for ornament and decoration ; we have no longer a space left for that ceremony and fashion, which once gave society its highest polish, its most graceful finish. We can no longer afford to dispense those honours, which, valueless as they may now appear, were once cherished and esteemed, as things beyond price. To have sprung from a distinguished ancestry, is now a crime. To have inherited a patrician title, a disgrace. To have worn the symbols

of an immemorial fame, an insult to the community at large. Courts are declared to be the last remnants of barbaric pomp. Nobilities are proscribed, and their members reviled, as though they were the very tyrants and oppressors of the human race. The palaces of kings are rased and levelled to the ground. Kings themselves are driven into exile. Political constitutions, which have been sanctioned by the approving voice of ages, and excited the admiration of the world, are pronounced to be wicked contrivances and miserable impostures. Principles of government, which have been revered by countless generations, are contemptuously thrown aside as being incompatible with what is nonsensically termed the increasing civilization of the age, the progress of knowledge, the march of intellect. Change, reformation, reconstruction, are now the order of the day. Every ancient institution is subverted, every established usage interdicted, every honorable privilege annulled, because a few selfish and seditious demagogues have arrived at the conclusion that they alone are the high priests of civilization; that they alone are the true lights of the world; that they alone are capable of guiding and directing the great wheel of social improvement in its onward course.

Whatever may be the delusive advantages which are promised to flow from this virtual abolition of all social rank, by establishing a universal and unconditional equality, we feel persuaded that no permanent benefits will ever spring from such a monstrous violation of the rights of individual classes. By confiscating the property of the rich, by robbing men

of their honestly-acquired wealth, and by depriving them of their justly-earned right to enjoy an immunity from labour, the poorer classes of society may, for a period, be enabled to live more comfortably, as well as to procure subsistence with less exertion. The immediate relief that the necessitous would derive from the first fruits of a Socialist triumph no one will dispute. Such a state of things, however, could not last long. The golden age would be short indeed, and the iron age quickly follow, for the industrious part of the community will very soon cease to labour, if the moment they gain an advantage in the shape of property it is to be seized by a Communist government, and appropriated to support the idler and the vagrant. The working bees will not toil merely to feed the drones of the hive. Some of the more moderate apostles of the Social Democracy, it is true, proclaim that an equality of rank is all that they desire to attain; but he must be blind indeed who does not see that they who are so eager to exterminate the aristocracy of rank and title, will be equally unwilling to admit the existence of an aristocracy of wealth. Thousands and tens of thousands in France are ready to support men who proclaim openly that no one has a right to enjoy the superfluities of luxury while a single person is wanting in the common necessities of life—a dogma by no means reconcilable with that hypocritical respect for property, which the Socialist leaders so loudly profess. The accumulation of riches, the distinctions of title, and the inheritance of power, are undoubtedly productive of many evils.

Vanity, selfishness, tyranny, and ostentation, may sometimes be thus engendered. We know how easily pride gains admission to the heart. We know how apt even the purest are to err. Nothing human is without imperfection. But does it follow that because a few persons abuse the talent which has been intrusted to their keeping, the many who turn it to a virtuous application should be debarred from its possession? Is there no advantage resulting from the various incentives to emulation, to ambition, and advancement, which these rewards are perpetually generating? Is not all government more stable when directed by classes of men who are for the most part gifted with superior education, and who, by the long standing of their social position, command that esteem which makes an office respectable, instead of degrading it into an object of contempt? Is there no benefit to be derived from the fact, that by perpetuating honours and estates in certain families, leisure is bestowed upon a portion of the community—thus enabling them to cultivate the arts and the courtesies, the amenities and the charities of civilized life. Is illustrious origin to be considered an obstruction to preferment, and a bar upon the escutcheon of virtue? Is the fame of an honourable ancestry to bear its possessor no recommendation, to be of no avail? Are our views to be entirely confined to the wants and necessities of the present hour? Is there nothing from the past worthy to be garnered up, and kept in remembrance; nothing worthy to be personified and reproduced in future times? Are we as if actuated by

a spirit of malignant envy, to desire that every one should be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water; that all shall be made to earn daily bread by daily labour? Yet such must inevitably result, if half the projects of Socialism proposed within the last few years be realised and put in practice.

Already we look in vain amidst the desolations of France for that hospitality of feeling which once conferred upon society such fascinating charms, for that affability of manner which softened and captivated the hearts of all who came within the circle of its influence. We look in vain for that delicacy of taste, that elegance of grace, that sensibility of mind, which oftentimes united to impassioned genius and the most sparkling wit, threw a lustre over the whole civilized world. But the days of Rochefoucauld and La Vallière, of Sevigne and La Fayette, have passed away. The glories of Rambouillet and Versailles have vanished. Solitude reigns in the gardens of the Trianon. With the declining sun of the ancient monarchy of St. Louis expired the last rays of a society, the brilliancy of which can only be imagined by tracing the dim and dusty records of historical annals. And what has France derived from the change, but a restless, a tumultuous, and a turbulent democracy, in which the distinctions of genius, of heroism, of devotion, only point out their possessor as a victim for the the midnight assassin or the noonday murderer?

*“ Venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus
Dardanæ : fuimus Trôes fuit Ilium, et ingens
Gloria Teucrorum : ferus omnia Jupiter Argos
Transtulit : incensâ Danai dominantur in urbe.”*

V. We shall now proceed to offer a few remarks upon that minute subdivision of landed property in France, which may be regarded as one of the principal causes of her present political and social disorganisation. The most fatal legacy bequeathed by the great revolutionary change of 1789 is, beyond all question, the permanent establishment of that vast body of small landholders, who alike prevent the soil from being profitably cultivated, and the state from being properly governed. As Talleyrand aphoristically observed, "The Revolution unboned France." To seek the origin of this injurious subdivision of the land, which is now seriously prejudicing the agricultural prosperity of the country, as well as wholly precluding the establishment of any permanently durable government, we must refer to that sacrilegious alienation of church property which was unhappily effected amidst the frenzied excitement of the revolutionary epoch, and which, from the peculiar circumstances of the time, soon led to a complete partition of the soil into an almost infinite number of small estates. Nothing could be more unjust or more reprehensible than the sale of church lands authorised by the Constituent Assembly in 1790, for the purpose of repairing the financial difficulties of the state. Not only the clergy, but by far the majority of the nation were strongly opposed to such a step. Out of thirty-six of the chief commercial towns, only seven could be induced to send up addresses in favour of so dangerous a project being carried into execution. Even the assembly itself was by no means unanimous in the vote which decided

the question. No possible arguments could be adduced to prove that the legislature had the right to interfere with the administration of the church property, so as to appropriate its funds for secular purposes, or render them available to meet the demands of the national creditor. In vain did the Abbè Maury and Sieyes oppose this infamous proposition; their remonstrances had no effect, and the property of the church, instead of being left to provide for the legitimate maintenance of the clergy and the endowment of hospitals for the poor, was transferred to the harpies of revolutionary faction preparatory to its final confiscation. The monetary distresses of the nation were however too severe to admit of anything approaching to a reasonable adjustment; and the issue of paper money, under the shape of *Assignats*, having been adopted to supply the deficiency of the precious metals, the holders of these documents claimed proportionate fragments of the ecclesiastical estates in exchange. Thus a considerable portion of the landed property in France was irrevocably divided, the number of territorial proprietors rapidly increasing, because every one felt that the tenure of the soil formed the surest guarantee in such troubled times. As the course of revolutionary innovation progressed other laws were passed, which completed the partition of those lands that were independent of the church. It was ordained that no man had power to give or bequeath his property, but that upon his death the government should intervene and cause his estate to be equally divided among his nearest relations. During

the Consulate this injudicious and unjust decree became somewhat modified, inasmuch as parents were then permitted to dispose of a certain portion of their estates in favour of their children. When engaged in the construction of his celebrated civil code, Napoleon from his remarks evidently foresaw the evils consequent upon the extreme revolutionary subdivision of the land; but great as might be his authority, he did not venture to propose a fundamental alteration in the laws of succession authorised by the Constituent Assembly, since any effort of this kind would infallibly have been regarded as an attempt to restore the feudal oppressions of the territorial noblesse. Most of the leading men in France were either implicated in the death of Louis XVI., or had become possessed of the confiscated estates of the emigrants, therefore their interest in preventing a Restoration which would have alike endangered their property and their heads, formed too great an obstacle for even the determined mind of Napoleon to surmount. Hence the restraints to prevent the future accumulation of landed property were studiously multiplied, whilst all attempts to revive the laws of primogeniture, even though in a modified shape, met with but a faint support from the community at large. After the Empire had been established for a few years, an effort was made to advance its consolidation by the creation of a few *majorats* in order to produce an imperial imitation of the ancient noblesse, but so unpopular had the very name of an aristocracy become, that Napoleon did not think it prudent to venture far in this direction.

Altogether the privilege was not assumed in more than three hundred instances, a number too insignificant, considering the concomitant restrictions, to exercise any material influence over political affairs. Upon the Restoration of the Bourbons some change in the laws which regulate the inheritance of landed property might have been anticipated. Such, however, was not the case, and if we except an unsuccessful motion brought forward by some deputies of the French Chamber in 1826, for a partial restoration of entails and the rights of primogeniture, no retrograde steps were taken. Even amidst the vast organic changes which the French Constitution has recently undergone, the laws of succession still remain unaltered. According to the existing regulations "a person with one child may dispose of a moiety of his property, the child inheriting the other half as *legitim*, or matter of right; a person having two children can only dispose of a third part of his property; a person having more than two must divide his property equally amongst them, one fourth part being all that is then left at his disposal. When a father dies intestate his property is equally divided amongst his children, without respect to sex or seniority." This compulsory subdivision and distribution of landed property upon the decease of the owner, inevitably tends in the main to increase the number of separate proprietors; although it must be admitted, the evil is somewhat mitigated by the fact, that the elder heir frequently purchases back the shares which the law has transferred to the younger children, and thus reconstructs in some measure the

original estate. Owing to such an unwise interference on the part of the government in reference to the disposal of testamentary bequests, the number of territorial proprietors increases every year; and it is to be seriously apprehended that unless active measures are soon taken to prevent this continual segregation of the soil into an infinity of petty allotments, the agriculture of the nation will degenerate and prove hardly superior to that of a semi-barbarous, or half-civilized people. Upon referring to statistical tables derived from the official reports which were prepared for the information of the government previous to the Revolution of February, the progress of this *morcellement* is clearly shown. Thus, there were

SEPARATE PROPERTIES

SEPARATE PROPRIETORS.

In 1815 10,000,000 held by 4,800,000.

In 1847 11,600,000 held by 5,500,000.

It is computed by the best authorities upon this subject, that at least 5,000,000 of these little territorial *parcelles* do not yield, after the necessary expenses of cultivation have been deducted, a revenue of more than £4 per annum to their individual owners; and that of the 5,000,000 separate proprietors, not more than 20,000 are, in the receipt of incomes from their estates, exceeding £200 per annum; while there are at least 3,000,000 of the peasant proprietors who cannot be said to realise a net profit of £2 per annum. When the discussion of this subject occupied the attention of the French Chambers in 1826, M. de Villèle, among other remarks, observed: "Fortunes may perhaps be reconstructed, but not properties. It

is easy to divide the soil, but it is next to impossible to reunite it. The greatest sacrifices which one might be disposed to make to reconstruct a divided property would often fail of success. Man attaches himself naturally to the spot of ground he has bought or inherited. The smaller it is, the more obstinately he clings to it. You might cover it with gold, without persuading him to accept your price. And accordingly there is no instance of a great property formed again from the fractions of one which has been divided. Small properties are no doubt necessary, but I should wish to preserve the middling class, and prevent the higher from being altogether dismembered." These are sensible views, and it is to be lamented that the prejudices of the national mind should have obstinately thwarted the policy of this minister in his efforts to mitigate the stringency, and amend the errors of the laws of inheritance and succession.

The evils arising from this perpetually increasing *morcellement* of the landed property in France, may be considered in a twofold point of view: first, in reference to the impediments which such a process of subdivision must inevitably raise to obstruct the proper cultivation of the soil; and, secondly, in reference to the injurious tendency which the absence of large landholders must exert in impairing the efficiency of the civil government, by necessitating the constant presence of an executive endowed with extreme centralisation of power, and thus precluding the development of any practical or rational liberty.

A well-adjusted division of labour is, or ought to

be, one of the fundamental principles which should guide the legislature of a nation, in framing the laws that are intended to regulate the social economy of its population, since a highly-civilized state of society can scarcely be maintained unless this salutary system is favoured by the general policy of the government, and fostered by the collateral aid of judicious legislation. At the present day it would be a work of supererogation to point out the advantages resulting from the division of labour. Every one knows how much more profitably the industry of a people may be employed by distinct classes undertaking to perform distinct duties, and by individuals acquiring a peculiar knowledge to apply it to the practice of a peculiar science or profession, than if each person attempted to follow a variety of occupations from fallacious notions of the independence thus obtained. The French nation, if we may judge from their inconsistent legislation, do not appear to concur entirely in these common sense views, but imagine that men will be more likely to carry their industry to the highest point of success, by confining a multiplicity of employments to one person, than by distributing them singly to many. Thus, in one of the official reports, the following passage may be found, proving how limited is the progress which the French people have hitherto made in the practical application of a sound system of political economy to supply their social wants, and direct the energy of the laborious classes to a profitable market. "We have 2,000,000 families of peasant proprietors, who feed themselves altogether upon their

own productions ; but to produce this food, each must have a bit of vineyard for drink, a bit of arable for bread, a bit of garden for potatoes, a bit of pasture for the goat—and these bits can hardly ever be together ; the vine must be on the hill, and the grass in the valley, and so on.” But what magnifies the folly of the legislature countenancing this injurious system of territorial subdivision is the fact, that a large portion of the soil is actually rendered unavailable for tillage in consequence of the innumerable hedgerows, fences, roads, and paths, which are required to denote the exact boundaries of each allotment, as well as to allow the various occupations of the agriculturist, such as the harvesting of corn and the carriage of manure, to be duly performed. In the report laid before a Committee of the Peers in 1825, great emphasis is laid upon these practical disadvantages. Thus, in one passage we find that “a property of two acres may be composed of a thousand morcels, each no bigger than a furrow ; and each of these furrows is, perhaps, separate from the rest, and surrounded by the furrows of other people. Add to these difficulties the damage done in seed time to each of the little contiguous parcels already sown by other farmers, because the strips are so narrow that the feet of the oxen of him who ploughs last must necessarily trample the edges of the adjoining furrow which has been already sown by his neighbour.” As might naturally be expected, the borders of these petty holdings give rise to perpetual disputes and interminable litigation, each proprietor often selfishly

insisting upon his right to enclose some miserable patch of land, while his neighbour is equally determined to resist the encroachment. So also from the impossibility of cultivating these fragmental slips of territory separately, the owners are frequently induced to combine and lay the whole down in pasture, but even this expedient is often attended with inconvenience, since the parties seldom agree respecting the proportion of cattle they have a right to keep upon the land according to their individual claims. By far the greatest disadvantage, however, arising from the minute subdivision of landed property in France, is the waste or unproductive labour that such a system of agricultural cultivation must inevitably necessitate. Thus we take it to be pretty clearly established that if the soil were eligibly reunited and partitioned into moderate holdings, varying from fifty to three hundred acres, the occupiers possessing a suitable amount of capital, an equal produce might be obtained with at least half the manual labour at present employed, whilst the other half, which is now uselessly frittered away without yielding any profitable result, might be rendered available for the construction of railroads or the extension of manufactures. For instance, supposing a farm of five hundred acres could be brought into the most perfect state of cultivation possible by one proprietor and thirty-nine labourers, while under the *morcellement* system, eighty peasant proprietors could only make the same farm yield a similar amount of produce, it is clear that the industry of forty persons would be sacrificed and utterly lost. Two-thirds of

the population are computed as being engaged in agricultural pursuits, hence the nation annually destroys about one-third of its labour, by an insane persistence in a course which every person gifted with common sense must consider indefensible both in theory and practice. Well may M. Lafitte exclaim, "Our agriculture is as poor and as ignorant as in the days of feudality."

Unquestionably, the fact of a man being the possessor of landed property does stimulate him to employ severe and incessant labour, to bring it to the highest state of cultivation. We see this exemplified daily in the colonial settlements of the British Empire, where the mere grant of a certain portion of land is sufficient to induce emigrants to clear it amidst a thousand obstructions; whereas, if the same territory, were only leased to them for a short term, they would hesitate to accept it, or certainly use but little exertion to render it capable of tillage. In small holdings, like those of France, a system of vigorous and effective husbandry is out of the question. The owners do not possess sufficient capital either to make the necessary improvements, or to purchase the manures required for the nutrition and renovation of the soil. Hence, after a period, their land, instead of producing to the full measure of its capability, yields but scanty and most imperfect crops. Arthur Young, who wrote upon the subject of French agriculture, at the close of the last century, after these fundamental changes had taken place in the tenure and cultivation of the land, observes: "Before I travelled, I conceived

that small farms in property were very susceptible of good cultivation, and that the occupier of such having no rent to pay, might be sufficiently at his ease to work improvements; but what I have seen in France has greatly lessened my good opinion of them. Indeed, I saw nothing respectable upon small properties, except a most unremitting industry. Forty or fifty acres in property are not incapable of good husbandry, but twenty *must* be ill cultivated." That the agricultural produce of France is greater at the present time than it was a century ago is no argument in favour of a minute subdivision of landed property. Undoubtedly, the feudal privileges of the nobles and the clergy, the oppressive taxation, the hardships of the gabelle, the corvées, and other burdensome imposts, did form serious obstacles in preventing the cultivators of the soil from what is technically termed "farming high" under the old regime. Undoubtedly, the low price at which many of the propriétaires obtained their lands, amidst the anarchical disorders of Revolution, gave them great advantages upon the first introduction of the *morcellement* system. But what the French nation should rather ascertain, is whether the land is as productive now as it ought to be, considering the abolition of the feudal restrictions, the equalisation of taxation, the improvements of science, and the general advance of social civilization. Whether if by such an alteration in the laws of inheritance, as ordained estates, not exceeding fifty acres, to remain indivisible, a greater amount of agricultural produce could not be raised, than under the present deplorable

system of scattered parcels and imperfect tillage. All recent evidence derived from impartial observers tends to confirm the opinion of Arthur Young, that the incompetence of the peasant proprietors combined with the deficiency of capital must ultimately throw society back to its first rude elements—a mere barbarian occupation of the soil, instead of the possessor deriving a surplus profit from its cultivation, after deducting the expense of implements and labour. Mr. Birkbeck, in his *Tour through France*, (1823) remarks of the agricultural population: “Poor from generation to generation, and growing continually poorer as they increase in numbers; such a people, instead of proceeding from the necessities to the comforts of life, and then to the luxuries, as is the condition of things in England, are rather retrograde than progressive. There is no advancement, no improvement, no hope of it.” Mr. J. Cobbett, in his *“Ride through France,”* (1823) corroborates this opinion. Thus, when passing through Normandy, he says, “They tell me that the revolutionary law of succession has dispersed thousands upon thousands; that it is daily operating in the same way; that it has in a great degree changed the state of the farm buildings; that it has caused the land to be worse cultivated. ’Tis clear, that if the present law remain the land must be all cut up in little bits; that a farm house must become a rare sight; and that a tree, worthy of the name of timber, will scarcely be seen in a whole day’s ride.” “If this law,” says Malthus, “should continue in force, and if some means be

not found to elude it, there is every reason to suppose that the country will be, at the end of a century, as remarkable for its extreme indigence as for its extreme equality of property." "As yet, the system of territorial subdivision," observes Mr. McCulloch, "is only in its infancy. Should it be supported in its present vigour for another half century *la grande nation* will certainly become the greatest pauper warren in Europe." These gloomy anticipations of future evil are, perhaps, exaggerated and somewhat darkly coloured, yet it is impossible to arrive at any other conclusion than that the amount of agricultural produce might be largely increased, if the present baneful system of subdividing landed property *ad infinitum* were discontinued. Small properties may, we admit, afford considerable stimulus to labour, by holding forth the hope of a future possession of the soil to the peasantry, but the concomitant ill effects more than counterbalance this advantage. Indeed we have no hesitation in stating, that the *morcellement* of the land almost neutralises the benefits derived from the abolition of the feudal tenures, and the removal of those intolerable oppressions which so encumbered and impoverished the cultivators of the soil under the old regime. Whatever ameliorations may be observed in French agriculture, have arisen not in consequence but in spite of the laws of inheritance, and we firmly believe, that if the petty occupancies of land were agglomerated into moderate-sized and convenient holdings, varying from fifty to five hundred acres, a rapid increase of agricultural production would follow.

The acquisition of landed property by the poorer classes of society, has always found advocates and opponents in the schools of political economists. Some represent it as an element of unmixed good, others as one of unmixed evil. Truth probably lies between the two. If labourers habituate themselves to work merely to supply the existing wants of the hour, they are apt when in full employment to spend their surplus wages upon mere sensual pleasures; it is therefore highly desirable to place before them some accessible object in the shape of property which shall be within reach of their means, and serve as a perpetual inducement to keep them industrious and economical. Thus, a cottage with an adjacent perch or two of garden ground, to employ the leisure hours of the labourer, may be possessed by him with the greatest advantage to society; but if in lieu of this he acquire an acre or two of ground, and become converted from a hired servant into a petty proprietor, the result will be most pernicious, not only to himself but to community at large. There is every probability that in such a case the acre of ground would be about half cultivated, and his own time about half employed. If we desire to seek an instance of the miseries arising from the system of small holdings, one need only refer to the state of Ireland, a country in which this experiment has been tried upon the largest scale, and in which it has been attended with a most decisive failure. The extent of farms in Ireland, particularly in the south, varies from two to fifty acres, the occupiers of these slips of ground being for the most part

peasants who know literally nothing about the principles of agriculture, who possess scarcely any capital, and whose ideas upon the subject of cultivation extend to the fact of putting a potato into the ground in the spring and digging it up again in the autumn. In fact, the principle of an agrarian equality is carried out to its full extent, with all the attendant evils of a redundant population. Thus, out of 3000 farms in the county of Tipperary, 1000 are less than five acres in extent. Cultivation is carried on principally by the spade, and all the operations of tillage are performed in a most imperfect and slovenly manner. Even the requisite implements for the proper culture of the soil are wanting. The consequences of this beggarly system of agriculture very soon become palpable, in the pauperised and wretched appearance of the people. They have neither food to eat, money to pay their rent, or clothes to protect them from the vicissitudes of the weather. Mr. Kohl, an intelligent traveller, has recently remarked the impediments which small farms throw in the way, to obstruct the advancement of agricultural science. "Farms," says he, "which were originally sufficient for the support of a man and his family, have in many cases been divided from generation to generation, the father always giving a bit of the land to each of his sons to set them up in the world. This subdivision of farms is universally prevalent in Ireland, and is one of the many sources of her great poverty. Every one is anxious to possess a bit of ground to till for himself; and however praiseworthy this desire may be, yet when carried too

far, as in Ireland, it causes the greatest mischief. From this endless division, it arises that every one at last possesses a piece of ground so small that the occupier and his family are always in a state between bare existence and starvation." Another eminent authority observes, "We repeat it again, that the too great subdivision of land is the bane and curse of Ireland; and until the land has been cleared of the superfluous tenants, and consolidated into farms capable of being properly managed, she will continue to be overspread with barbarism and misery." The Subletting Act has, it is true, in some degree prevented the farther spread of this injudicious practice of subdividing estates, but the farms even now remain sufficiently limited to engender a vast amount of pauperism, besides subjecting the land to a most imperfect tillage. There is scarcely a writer of any reputation when treating of Ireland, who does not advise the number of occupiers to be lessened, as well as the size of the farms to be augmented; and until this desirable change be consummated, the Condition of Ireland Question will remain an inexhaustible topic to excite the energy of quarterly reviewers, and perplex the wisdom of parliaments.

Although it may be laid down as a general and well-established rule in the science of practical agriculture that small farms are prejudicial, yet under certain peculiarities of climate, situation, or natural fertility, the land admits of being greatly subdivided. For instance, where the soil is exceedingly rich from the constant irrigation of numerous rivers, or from the

convenient application of an abundance of artificial manures—where an enterprising population engaged in manufactures or trade are contiguously situated, or where the transit of goods to a favourable market can be easily effected by means of railroads and canals, small farms, or to speak more correctly, large gardens prove admirably adapted to ensure the highest cultivation of the land, as well as to return a profitable rate of interest upon the capital employed. Every one is familiar with the value of market gardens in the vicinity of London, Manchester, Paris, or indeed of any populous city. The district lying between Ghent and Antwerp, the lands surrounding the large towns in Lombardy, the country between Lodi and Cremona in Milan, the *métairies* of Tuscany, the Pays de Vaud, and several of the Dutch Provinces, furnish examples which may be quoted in favour of a minute subdivision of agricultural property; but in each of these instances it will be observed upon close investigation, either that the land naturally displays a rare and exuberant fertility, or that its produce has acquired an adventitious value from its proximity to large towns, the inhabitants of which are prosperously engaged in the pursuit of manufactures and foreign commerce. It is clear, however, that the principle of an extreme division of land for agricultural purposes into small allotments should have reasonable limits to its application; thus, an enclosure consisting of a few acres, five miles distant from a populous city, may answer admirably under a spade husbandry and expensive manures; whereas, a field of similar dimensions,

enjoying the same advantages as regards soil and climate, but twenty miles distant, might if farmed upon such a plan prove a sadly unprofitable speculation. When capital, if embarked in the cultivation of the soil, can be made to return a very high rate of interest, and where favourable markets are always at hand for a ready disposal of the produce, the *morcellement* system may be occasionally eligible, but it must be considered as an exception to a general rule, and should only be adopted where a concatenation of peculiar circumstances seem to warrant its introduction.

As one might readily conjecture, the condition of the agricultural proprietors in France is extremely embarrassed, the majority of them being heavily encumbered with mortgage deeds and other legal obligations. It is calculated that about three-fifths of the occupiers of land are burdened with these unpleasant documents; and that one-third are hopelessly involved by the accumulating amount of interest in arrear. Upon the trifling sums of money required for these purposes, the lender demands a very high rate of interest, frequently 12 per cent, and where the loan is merely temporary, as much as 24 per cent; hence, if the seasons or the harvests prove unpropitious, the unfortunate borrower is soon reduced to the alternative of selling his property or transferring it to the mortgagee. The consequences of this impolitic system of borrowing money at an usurious rate of interest, are not long in developing themselves to the general injury of society. The occupier of land, finding himself inextricably entangled in debt, not

only gives up all hopes of being able to repay the loan he has received, but, foreseeing that his interest in the business will soon be at an end, neglects the cultivation of his farm also. Another evil is the continual change of owners to which the land is subjected by properties being so frequently surrendered to the mortgagee, or sold to repay the loans previously advanced. Partly from this cause, and partly from the natural descent of estates to children by inheritance, at least 60 per cent of the whole territorial property of France has actually changed hands within the brief interval of ten years; while of the land thus transferred, one half is computed to have passed from its original owners, entirely by what in England we should term a sheriff's sale. So much for the boasted prosperity of a peasant proprietary !

A country can hardly be considered over populated until a large proportion of its inhabitants are unable to obtain the daily means of subsistence without depending upon the charity of the government. France, it is true, has not exactly arrived at this climax of misfortune, yet if the present system of agriculture be persisted in for a few generations more, the condition of her rural population will be wretched in the extreme, and universal pauperism rapidly ensue. We think it may be assumed as a fact, that owing to the partition of land into small holdings, agriculture is not prosecuted in France as a mode of realising a profit upon the capital employed, but solely to acquire the means of existence for the actual occupiers of the soil. If, therefore, at the present time, the peasant proprietors

could even prove that they were all living in comfortable circumstances from the results of their labour, it would be no guarantee that they would be enabled to do so ten years hence, because with every new generation where there is no surplus capital accumulating in the interval, the aggregate population must be getting more and more impoverished. That such is the case in France we have little reason to doubt. Indeed, one of the greatest evils attendant upon these small holdings is the encouragement which they give to early and improvident marriages; for no sooner does the peasant come into possession of his paternal inheritance of a few acres, than he considers himself a proprietor, and enters into the connubial state with all the nonchalance of a gentleman in possession of a thousand a year. The numerous families that spring from these imprudent marriages would soon create an unparalleled amount of misery and wretchedness, if there were not some circumstances that tend to mitigate the distress to which they give rise. France being a great military nation, and requiring a large force to maintain her national pre-eminence, does not keep less than half a million of men under arms; and as the recruits are principally drawn from the rural districts, this forms a very salutary outlet for a proportion of her redundant population. In order to fill up the void created by so vast a diminution of the able-bodied workmen, women are compelled to perform the rudest kinds of agricultural labour; and by this unnatural, as well as barbarous practice, the loss is to a certain extent repaired. The French people, more

particularly the peasantry engaged in the cultivation of the soil, are, it must also be admitted, exceedingly temperate in their mode of living, as well as moderate in their desires; hence a trifling pittance of money suffices to procure their ordinary pleasures and amusements, as well as to render them contented with their lot. A little rye bread, some vin ordinaire, a pipe of tobacco, with an occasional merry making in the neighbouring village, serve to fill up the routine of the peasant's life, and answer the purpose of gratifying him at a very humble expense. Our English labourers often spend as much in a week upon fermented liquors as a French peasant would in six, so different are the habits and tastes of the two nations. The picture that Goldsmith drew of the French people a century ago, has not lost its truth; they remain much the same in character as when the poet made his strolling tour upon the banks of the Loire, and paid his reckoning at the tavern by amusing them with his flute—

So blest a life these thoughtless realms display;
 Thus idly busy rolls their world away:
 They please, are pleased; they give to get esteem;
 Till seeming blest, they grow to what they seem.

With a people of such abstemious habits, and a soil of such natural fertility, France can hardly be deemed an over-populated country. Nor is the increase of population progressing so rapidly as to place her people beyond the means of obtaining subsistence, if they use but common industry and common application. Thus, the annual augmentation of the population,

taking an average of all the departments, is not more than 46 to every 10,000 inhabitants, or barely half per cent. Hence, if the system of agriculture were improved, and the produce of the soil increased, there is nothing to prevent France becoming a large corn exporting country, now that the British ports are thrown open to admit foreign grain, free from all fiscal restrictions, except the nominal duties required for the purposes of statistical information.

France is essentially an agricultural country, the produce of the soil forming the staple source from whence her national wealth has been derived. The land is by far the most important of her possessions, since it can not only furnish the entire subsistence of the population, but contributes more than one-half the sum required to maintain the government of the state. The small proportion of territory in France favoured with the advantages of a sea-coast, the few natural productions she possesses that are adapted to stimulate the introduction of manufactures, and the reluctance which her people have always shewn when invited to engage in maritime commerce, concur to direct the energies of her population principally to the cultivation of the land, as the chief fountain from whence they can expect to obtain a permanent supply of wealth. When compared with Great Britain, the capability of France for the successful prosecution of agriculture appears strikingly superior. Thus,

	ACRES.	ACRES.
In Great Britain there are	77,000,000, of which	16,000,000 are sterile.
In France,	„ 132,000,000, of which	9,000,000 are sterile.

Again,

	ACRES.
In Great Britain there are	27,000,000 devoted to Pasturage.
In France, „	24,000,000 devoted to Pasturage.

So that the French people not only enjoy more than double the extent of land adapted for arable purposes that we possess in this country, but require to divert considerably less for the sustenance of horses and cattle. If we proceed farther in the comparison, and contrast the numerical amount of the population in either country, with the number of acres they can individually apply to the purposes of agriculture, we shall at once perceive the manifest superiority enjoyed by our neighbours in this respect. Thus,

	POPULATION.	ACRES.
In Great Britain there are	27,000,000 to	60,000,000 ; or 1 to 2 acres.
In France, „	35,000,000 to 123,000,000 ;	or 1 to 3½ acres.

Consequently, supposing the land in both nations to be equally well cultivated and equally fertile, the income derivable from the soil should be incomparably greater in France than it is with ourselves. Yet such we apprehend is far from being the case, since the best authorities upon the subject assert that the total annual produce of the soil of France does not exceed £80,000,000 a year, including the rent of buildings ; while the returns of landed property in Great Britain, as defined by the Income Tax, indicate a clear annual rental of £100,000,000 a year.

The cause of this remarkable inferiority on the part of France, as regards the success of her agricultural enterprise, may be attributed to a variety of circumstances, and of these the most prominent are, First, the absence of that class of landed proprietors who

by the possession of large estates can afford to abate the rents of their farms when the seasons prove unfavourable or the crops fail, and who from their affluence are occasionally enabled to advance capital for improvements and the necessary repairs. Secondly, the short term of leases upon which land is usually hired in France, prevents the tenant from attempting to make any permanent alteration in the quality of the ground, and induces him to run out the farm, or, in other words, to plant a succession of cereal crops that exhaust the nutritive powers of the soil. Thirdly, the minute subdivision of land, which has arisen from the laws of inheritance, acts most prejudicially in preventing a proper rotation of crops, and wholly precludes the possibility of resting the soil with a desirable proportion of fallows. In Scotland, for example, it is a well-established fact, that in the counties where land is most subdivided the occupiers are extremely needy, and their methods of cultivation very far inferior to those practised upon estates where the farms are larger in extent, and held by a more respectable class of tenantry. Fourthly, the comparatively small number of the French people engaged in manufactures and working to supply foreign markets; thus, for instance, in Great Britain there are eight millions of the population more or less dependent upon manufactures, who export £60,000,000 of goods per annum, while in France there are barely seven millions engaged in the same department to furnish £30,000,000 for foreign export. Hence the demand for agricultural produce from this quarter in France

is proportionately considerably more limited than in England, or at least it was so before the British legislature sanctioned the admission of foreign corn free of all import duties—a questionable policy, since the boasted increase of £10,000,000 exports forms a very inadequate counterbalance to that withdrawal of capital from the cultivation of land which must inevitably ensue, unless the prices of corn rise much higher than they are ranging at the present time. Fifthly, the small proportion of capital which can be reserved from the produce of the soil in France for the free use of the proprietor, after the various deductions have been made to satisfy the demands of the state, and liquidate the amount of interest due to the private mortgagees. Thus, estimating the annual landed revenue of France in round numbers at £80,000,000 sterling, it will be found subject to the following drawbacks: viz., about £20,000,000 sterling in the shape of taxes to meet the public liabilities of the state, the department, and the commune, while £30,000,000 sterling more must be abstracted to pay the interest for private mortgage debts incurred by the occupiers of the soil, so that in this manner five-eighths of the landed revenue are absorbed and withdrawn from the business of cultivation, leaving only three-eighths, or £30,000,000 sterling, to maintain the vast agricultural population of the country, as well as to provide for the subsistence and profits of the actual occupiers of the land. M. Raudot, an eminent authority upon agricultural statistics in France, considers that the private incumbrances of the landed

proprietors exceed £560,000,000 sterling, a sum nearly as large as our National Debt, and increasing from year to year with fearful regularity ; thus, in 1832, it was only £450,000,000 sterling ; in 1840, £500,000,000 sterling ; and in 1850, it is computed at £560,000,000 sterling. The evils attendant upon this embarrassed condition of the French agriculturist are sufficiently evident ; he has not the requisite capital to provide either the proper implements or the necessary amount of labour essential to place the land in a high state of cultivation, and tax its productive powers safely to the utmost limits. His fields are always about half tilled. His crops are generally mortgaged away, and placed in the hands of the village notary, long before they are ripened for the sickle. He is never in a position to grapple with an untoward season, or to contend against a deficient harvest. His fate is continually at the mercy of the elements ; a gale of wind, a tempest, or a hail-storm, often proving sufficient to compel him either to transfer his farm to some usurious money-lender, or to exist almost in a state of starvation, until the period arrives for the next crop. Instead of inhabiting one of those comfortable hamlets so universally to be met with in the rural districts of England, he is obliged to content himself with a mud cabin of the rudest description, having scarcely a window to admit light or air, and generally surrounded by a few dilapidated outbuildings that give shelter, or profess to do so, to a colony of pigs, a goat or two, and occasionally a cow. His mode of cultivating the miserable plot of ground which forms the patrimonial

estate, might well be termed the pursuit of agriculture under difficulties. The implements and cattle are about upon a par, so that it is difficult to decide which is the worst. The team, consisting generally of a horse, a donkey, and a cow, when harnessed for tillage seldom manage to keep even step, so that the horse frequently has the satisfaction of drawing, not only the plough, but his helpmates the ass and the cow as well. To add to these obstacles, the fields are usually so small that half the day is occupied in turning; for before the cumbrous machine is fairly in motion it has arrived at the end of the furrow, or has trespassed in a most unfriendly way upon some neighbouring allotment. What with these troubles, and the ordinary casualties arising from the apparatus breaking down, or the harness getting out of gear, the only wonder is that the seed ever gets into the ground at all, and even when the operations of sowing are at an end the unhappy proprietor often finds the weeds growing faster than his seeds. This barbarous method of torturing the soil with implements that would certainly have been considered a disgrace in the middle ages, such as harrows with wooden pegs, drills mounted upon cart wheels, and ploughs which are more out of the ground than in it, must be entirely changed before any sensible improvement can be effected in French agriculture. Even in a political point of view it is of importance to make the soil more productive, and thus avert in some measure those periodically recurring famines, which sweep down the bulwarks of all stable government and shake the foundations of society to its

very base. France is not physically speaking over-populated. A mere knowledge of the absolute number of people in a country compared with the number of acres, will never enable us to say this nation is half populated, that is too densely populated, or another one is altogether over-peopled. A country with its agriculture scarcely removed from a barbarous and aboriginal condition, may be over-peopled with a million of inhabitants, while at a subsequent period, after vast improvements have taken place in the science and practice of husbandry, it cannot be considered over-peopled with ten millions of inhabitants. This is exactly the point with France. Her soil often fails to procure subsistence for the population solely from an imperfect cultivation, so that the destitution of the people must be attributed far more frequently to the negligence of man than to the parsimony of nature. The most fertile land does not avail until the energy of industry and the ingenuity of science have been applied to call forth its powers and ensure its renovation.

When the yearly increasing taxation demanded for the maintenance of the state, the rapid augmentation of private encumbrances that threaten to involve the whole proprietary of the soil in ruin, and the hasty steps with which the subdivision of land advances towards such an extreme *morcellement* as almost to defy cultivation, are conjunctively taken into consideration, the prospects of French agriculture must be regarded as cheerless and unpromising. Can it excite surprise that a mass of ignorant and half

bankrupt proprietors tottering, as it were, upon the verge of ruin, should listen with complaisance to the bold paradoxes and flimsy arguments of the Socialist agents, who promise future prosperity in exchange for present political support? Can we be astonished that illiterate peasants who see their last shilling passing into the hands of some extortionate usurer, should turn a willing ear to the flattering prophecies that issue from the oracles of Communism? Is it strange that a race of men who have been aptly described as "a people, for a long time shut up in the midst of woods, and but little advanced in the paths of civilisation," should be deluded and misled by the extravagant theories of Socialism? It is in vain to expect any amelioration in the social condition of the French peasantry, so long as the present ordinance respecting the inheritance of property remains in force. Until this fatal law is repealed nothing can be effected. While the landed property in France is subject to the laws of testamentary succession, as at present enforced, it is worse than idle to endeavour to dissuade the bankrupt proprietors of the agricultural districts from joining the ranks of the Socialist and the Democrat. Without credit, without comfort, without any prospective hope of brighter days, these men are, as it were, revolutionary from the force of circumstances. They see their children starving around them, their crops mortgaged, their patrimonial fields on the point of being transferred to other hands. Anger, jealousy, and a desire for revenge, take possession of their hearts; they attribute their private vicissitudes and misfortunes to

the imperfections of the government; infuriated with passion, they strike blindly at the columns which support the temple of social order, hoping to escape their impending fate amidst the anarchy which the falling ruin will occasion. M. Dupin, the President of the National Assembly, in addressing the peasants of the Morvand last autumn, eloquently said: "Throw your eyes around you, in every town, in every hamlet, observe those who are always the first to declaim against all kinds of authority, to cause assemblages, to form clubs, to spread alarming reports, to hold out foolish hopes, and to excite by every means the most odious and the most atrocious to the overthrow of society; and consider whether they are not always, and every where, individuals whose ruin was certain, and who were, according to one of your familiar expressions, *bien près de leurs pièces*; people who, not having been able to gain or preserve a patrimony, would very willingly partake of that of their industrious and economical neighbours." It is vain to proclaim a war of extermination against Communism, to expatriate its leaders, to proscribe its doctrines, to hold up to the abhorrence of mankind the criminal impostures and monstrous delusions propagated by its apostles, so long as the legislature of the state absurdly retains upon the statute book, that very law which seems almost, as it were, framed for the direct purpose of generating such a fatal evil in society, and fostering its growth. If Socialism is to be annihilated or rendered powerless, the work must be done by the legislator in the council chamber, and not by the

soldier on the barricades. It is not too late for France to retrace her steps. The path is open. The way is clear. Even the apparition of Feudalism is not left to endanger the work of reconstruction or to obstruct the design. The whole system of agricultural tenancy must be remodelled ; the first principles of agricultural cultivation must be taught. Labour must be applied to profitable purposes, instead of being hourly wasted by persisting in a radically unsound system of political economy. The peasant must be kept upon his native soil in the humble capacity of a hired servant, instead of being allowed to wander about as an expelled and bankrupt proprietor, to recruit the ranks of the dangerous classes that always, more or less, infest the large cities. Those restless hordes of idle and dissatisfied workmen which render Paris little better than a hostile camp, and diminish the employment of the industrious classes by their incessant conspiracies, or *emeutes* must be drained off through systematic emigration to Algeria, or some newly-established colony. A portion of the army must be disbanded, and its ranks employed in some manufactural or productive enterprise. France cannot afford to keep 570,000 men under arms in time of peace. It is this vast sum of misspent and unproductive labour that preys upon her vital parts, and reduces half her population to bankruptcy and indigence. At present she exists like a country that has obtained a brief truce amidst the desolating hostilities of a civil war ; thousands and thousands of famishing and idle workmen are ready, at a moment's signal, to descend into

the streets of Paris, and commence a general pillage; while, to keep this formidable multitude under control, an army is required as numerically great as that which enabled Napoleon to assume almost the dictatorship of Europe. This constant preparation to prevent anarchy, threatens to inflict upon France all the evils of military pauperism. There will at length be nothing left in the land but a vast multitude of starving paupers, watched by a soldiery of corresponding magnitude. To maintain the semblance of tranquillity, and keep such an army in an efficient state, the really industrious part of the nation must be subjected to a most onerous and excessive taxation; while by the numbers which are thus abstracted from the pursuits of agriculture and commerce, those springs of national wealth are allowed to flow away without being turned to any advantage. To rectify these evils, to direct the industry of the people into profitable channels, to simplify production by the application of machinery, to lighten the ruinous burden of taxation by a diminution of the military force, to revive the agriculture of the country by reproducing a class of proprietors possessing large landed estates, to expand the means of employing the people by improving the methods and encouraging the advance of manufactural enterprise, are duties meriting the attention and energy of French statesmen, duties which, if honestly performed, would tend far more to the salvation and prosperity of France, than the fabrication of those wretched paper constitutions which induce the lower orders of society to believe that by acquiring the right

to exercise a mere fractional portion of political power, they will be enabled to live without industry, and to prosper without toil.

No permanent improvement in the social condition of the French people can be effected, so long as the present laws of testamentary succession remain valid. By the injurious results which follow their operation, Communism is not only perpetuated, but identified with, and legally applied to, the cultivation of the soil. To revoke this fatal ordinance must be the first step taken to regenerate French agriculture; for if by a reasonable mitigation of those harsh restrictions which enforce the subdivision of land to an infinitesimal degree, the farms could be increased in size, and capitalists could be induced to embark in agricultural enterprise, there is no reason why the soil of France should not be so cultivated as always to ensure sufficient produce for the entire subsistence of her inhabitants; and in propitious years to export a considerable amount of grain also. It is the fashion of political economists in the present day to regard the cultivation of land as a very subordinate item in the internal economy of a nation. Let it lay idle, say they, so long as the spindles of Manchester and the looms of Lyons are at work. Let the population it formerly employed seek labour in other channels, and turn their hands to other pursuits. But the soundness of these views remains to be proved by experience. We still humbly subscribe to the proposition that a single uncultivated acre is a real physical and social evil to a state. We still regard the proper cultivation

of the land as the great *permanent* source of national wealth, as the main spring which keeps the machinery of industry in motion, as the legitimate field for the occupation of a major part of the population. In England, it may, *perhaps*, be politic to direct every effort to encourage the manufacturing industry of her teeming population, since, from her insular situation, from the churlish nature of her soil, and from the maritime energy displayed by her people, commerce forms such an essential element in augmenting the stores of her national wealth. With France, however, no one can doubt but that agriculture is the main support upon which her inhabitants must rely, and that nothing can keep her as a nation prosperous, or even respectable, but a system which shall maintain the great bulk of her population in employment upon a profitable and scientific cultivation of the soil. What France now imperatively demands, is the regeneration of her agriculture. This is the only remedy to repair her social evils, to save her from sinking into the darkened abyss of political ruin, to arrest the march of perpetual revolution, to rescue her from the horrors of anarchy, to snatch her from the impending dangers of civil war; and the Minister, who shall turn the swords of her vast armies into the ploughshare and the sickle, who shall restore contentment and abundance to her rural population, who shall reclothe her half-cultivated plains with the luxuriance and fertility of which they are capable, will be more highly deserving of his country's gratitude, than the fiery conqueror, who should lay half Europe in a state of vassalage at

her feet, or the ambitious soldier, who should inscribe another Austerlitz upon the columns of her martial fame.

It now only remains for us to make a few remarks upon the injurious results which have followed the destruction of the landed aristocracy in France, and left her without the possibility of obtaining any durable government, except that of a military despotism. The original purpose of the Revolution of 1789, was to change the French constitution from an absolute to a limited monarchy; but owing to the perverse obstinacy of the privileged orders, and the vacillating conduct of the king on the one hand, and the blind impetuosity of the popular party, as well as the guilty ambition of its leaders, on the other, this design wholly miscarried, and at length issued in the most sanguinary and appalling anarchy, the world ever witnessed. As Mr. Burke, at the outset of the Revolution, prophetically predicted: "When the National Assembly has completed its work, it will have accomplished its ruin." And such was the result. The church, the nobility, the crown, and the people were all trampled under foot, and upon their ruins arose a base and despicable oligarchy, composed of men of the most depraved and abandoned character, the dregs of society could produce. Authority soon passed from the representative body, chosen by the people, into the hands of this desperate faction, who disposed of the lives and property of twenty millions in a tribunal over which Draco would have hesitated to preside. The rule of these monsters was termed,

the Reign of Terror. Never did the robe of civilisation receive such a stain. Crime reigned over a whole people—faction succeeded faction, tyrant succeeded tyrant, murder succeeded murder—the hero of to-day was the victim of to-morrow—Philosophy was sacrificed in her own temple, Religion was immolated upon her own altar, Virtue was violated within the very sanctuary of her sacred hearth—Mercy fled from the tribunal of Justice—Justice blushed at the wrongs committed in her name—from the street to the court, from the court to the scaffold, from the scaffold to the grave, in one day beneath one sun. Nothing could satiate the lust, the ferocity, the vengeance of intoxicated faction; to be pure was to be guilty, to be holy was to be condemned—innocence was sin! Humanity shuddered at the sight, and took refuge under the wing of martial despotism. A few years sufficed to bring the stormy existence of the Republic to a close. The 9th Thermidor proved fatal to the power of the Jacobins. The 1st Prarial placed them completely *hors de combat*. Their leaders were guillotined, their clubs suppressed, their forces disarmed. The reign of the multitude, or rather that of the tyrants of the multitude, was at an end. “Experience,” said the deputies of the Section Lepelletier, “has taught us that the despotism of the people is as unsupportable as the tyranny of kings.” The 13th Vendémiaire would have terminated in a Bourbon Restoration, had not the republican chiefs of the army rallied to the support of the Convention. After this defeat of the Royalist reactionists, the reign of military despotism

commenced. Augereau was the predecessor of Napoleon. Henceforth every change in the government came to be decided by the will of the army. When the claims of opposing parties were equal, the sword of an able soldier turned the balance. The Revolutions of the 18th Fructidor and the 30th Prarial, were contests between the Directory as the executive, and the Councils of the Ancients and the Five Hundred as the legislative body. In that of Fructidor, the Directory, supported by a minority in the Councils, defeated the majority in the Councils. In that of Prarial, a minority of the Directory, aided by a majority in the Councils, triumphed over the majority of the Directory. In the 22nd Floreal, the government and the legislature sacrificed the sovereignty of the people by annulling the elections they had made. The success of these incessant revolts against the acknowledged government of the day, depended entirely upon the skilful strategy and bold audacity displayed by the various actors at the moment; the leaders of the contending factions sometimes attaining power, sometimes falling victims to their ambitious temerity. Of them, Juvenal might have truly said, "*Ille crucem sceleris pretium tulit, hic diadema.*"

The perilous instability of such governments, the perpetual uncertainty as to their permanence, and the dangerous passions they fostered, at length disgusted all parties, and induced the nation to seek tranquillity and repose from the hands of a military dictator. "We must have done with declaimers," said Sièyes, "what we want is a head and a sword." Constitutional

Now I believe the French Revolution was a series of military coups d'état.

government," observes M. Thiers, "is a chimera at the conclusion of a revolution, such as that of France. It is not under shelter of legal authority that parties, whose passions have been so violently excited, can arrange themselves and repose; a more vigorous power is required to restrain them, to fuse their still burning elements, and protect them against foreign violence. That power is the empire of the sword." Napoleon, upon his return from Egypt, perceiving that the government had become unpopular, and its institutions effete, consulted the leading military men in Paris as to the propriety of deposing the ruling powers. A favourable answer convinced him of the necessity for immediate action. Having assembled the army, and previously concerted arrangements with Sièyes and Barras to obtain the concurrence of a majority of the Ancients, he took the bold step of dissolving the Five Hundred at the point of the bayonet. This *coup de main*, known as the 18th Brumaire, led to the establishment of the Consulate. It transferred the supreme power to Napoleon. He became the virtual ruler of France. Sièyes now brought forward one of his philosophic constitutions, and proposed that Napoleon should assume the office of Grand Elector, sharing authority with a body to be termed the Tribune; but the general demurred, seeing that nothing could ensure stable government until absolute power was vested in the executive. "Your grand elector," sarcastically observed Napoleon, "would be merely the ghost of a *faineant* king of the old Merovingian dynasty. What man of common spirit would con-

descend to act such an ignoble part? Do you think the nation would allow a mere hog at Versailles to receive six millions a year for doing nothing?" The Abbé's impracticable plan having been put aside, Napoleon was made First Consul, two others being appointed to enlighten him by their counsel, but not to restrain him by their vote. He was to enjoy the right of declaring peace and war; to have the initiative of all the laws; to command the army, the militia, and the navy; to appoint functionaries to all diplomatic and municipal offices; finally, if the constitution were declared in danger, a discretionary power to suspend the laws was vested with him. He was to have the privilege of nominating his successor, and even to pardon offences at his pleasure. A Council of State, a Tribunal, a Senate, and a Legislative Body, were formed to assist him in the task of legislation; but they were rather masks to disguise the despotic power of the executive, than institutions framed for the purpose of giving any expression to public opinion. The Tribunal was soon afterwards abolished, leaving no deliberative assembly in the state. Upon a subsequent occasion, Napoleon, when referring to the Constitution which followed the 18th Brumaire, remarked, "I was convinced that France could not exist but under a monarchical government, yet the circumstances of the times were such that it was thought and perhaps was necessary to disguise the supreme power of the president." The Consular Constitution completely changed the existing order of things, by entrusting the principal authority of the state to the executive, and

making that office the sole depository of all political and military influence. The sovereignty of the people was at an end, their right to choose public functionaries being wholly withdrawn. All power emanated from the First Consul; he selected Members for the Senate, generals for the army, judges for the courts, and prefects for the departments. Authority was completely vested in the executive; the consular office being the culminating point of an extreme centralisation of power. Thus the government of France had become as absolute under Napoleon as it was in the days of Louis XIV., while the members of his Senate and Council of State rivalled those of the Parliaments of Paris in their obsequiousness and servility. Many republicans naturally objected that in the new constitution there was no guarantee left for the liberties of the people, but the political capacity and stern determination of their new master, soon put an end to these remonstrances. "*Nous avons un maitre,*" said Sièyes, "*qui sait tout, qui peut tout, qui veut tout.*" Among others, Matthieu earnestly implored Napoleon not to desert the republican principles of the Revolution. "Your discourse," said the general, "is just suited for a club." Regarding monarchy as the only eligible form of government for France, and knowing that an aristocracy was essential to maintain such an institution, Napoleon's policy soon developed itself in his varied efforts to abolish that equality which the destructive progress of the Revolution had produced. Many obstacles were present, however, to frustrate or at least to obstruct

such designs. If he appealed to the republicans for support, they would accuse him of attempting a Counter Revolution; if he appealed to the royalists, they would, if successful, naturally be aspiring to restore the legitimate family. Yet he deemed it the only course to pursue. "The principle of the French Revolution," said he, "being the absolute equality of all classes, there resulted from it a total want of aristocracy. If a republic is difficult to construct on any durable basis, without an order of nobles, much more so is a monarchy. To form a constitution in a country destitute of any species of aristocracy, is like attempting to navigate in a single element. The French Revolution has attempted a problem as insoluble as the direction of balloons." The institution of the Legion of Honour, the recall of the emigrant noblesse, and the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic episcopacy, were measures which, though much opposed by his councillors, paved the way for Napoleon to revive royalty in France. At length, in 1804, about four years after the revolution of the 18th Brumaire, he restored the monarchy under an imperial form, the Senate and the different Councils yielding their assent by large majorities. Three millions and a half of the people ratified the decree of the Senate by which Napoleon was raised to the imperial throne, so that his title to this elective form of monarchy rested upon broad foundations. A thousand years had passed away since Leo III. crowned Charlemagne, Emperor of the West; and now another soldier, equally distinguished by his prowess and his

fortunes in the field of battle, was consecrated by Pius VII., in Notre Dame, amidst a scene of unexampled magnificence to reign over nearly the same territory.

The genius of Napoleon was especially adapted to fascinate and enchant the French nation. His brilliant victories, his love of magnificent display, his taste for the arts, his patronage of scientific talent, and above all his patriotic devotion to the interests of France, rendered him the idol of the people. "What the French require," said La Bruyère, "is a serious sovereign;" and such was Napoleon. So long as he ruled, they were apathetic about republican principles, or at least permitted him, without a murmur, to destroy those very institutions which they had established at such a costly sacrifice. How changed in tone were the complimentary addresses laid at the foot of the Imperial Throne by the members of his emasculated Councils, from those contemptuous threats that were, a few years before, hurled against royalty in the Constituent Assembly, by Danton and Mirabeau. Napoleon, like most men possessing genius of the first order, was averse to divided power. As in the field, he rarely resorted to councils of war, so in conducting the civil administration of the state, he disliked any institutions which had a tendency to interfere with unity of direction in the executive. Hence, no sooner was the imperial fabric consolidated, than he began to design the destruction of those coadjutant public bodies, which he had thought proper to countenance while his authority was less securely

established. The Tribune was the first object he selected for extinction, deeming this assembly calculated to revive the smouldering embers of revolutionary faction and democratic passion. Although the members of this court had been reduced from a hundred to fifty, and were not eligible till they had attained forty years of age, yet their refractory conduct in discussing some of the propositions submitted by the executive for their approval, led Napoleon to imagine that an abolition of the institution was the most politic course he could pursue. The Tribune was accordingly dissolved, and the only public bodies left to share a nominal authority with the executive, were the Senate and a Council of State, the members of which were nominated and remunerated by the supreme head of the government. Another infringement upon the humble liberties which the people had been permitted to enjoy, was the establishment of a censorship of the press, so severe in its restrictions that the voice of public opinion became entirely suppressed. Thus the legitimate channels through which the intelligent portion of the people had a right to exert their influence upon the government were completely closed, and society was almost as far removed from the possession of true freedom as in the days when the feudal barons surrounded by their armed retinues rode roughshod over their oppressed but powerless inferiors. The military conscription, and various other measures of the imperial government, afforded instances of despotic oppression, that Louis XIV., in the plenitude of his power, had certainly not exceeded. It would

be difficult, perhaps, to offer any satisfactory apology for these stern measures of repression, since the people cannot be accused of having, under the Imperial Regime, made any very improper use of the privileges they enjoyed in the Tribune or the Public Press. Absolute power, unfortunately, however, offers great temptations; few men can resist its seducing allurements; least of all, minds bred in the discipline of camps, and habituated to the exercise of martial authority. Napoleon could never regard society except as a vast army entrusted to his command. Hence a concentration of power in its chief officer always appeared to him an essential point in the art of conducting civil government. As the imperial dynasty was doomed to fall before the legions of combined Europe, it matters but little what forms of administration were employed for the civil purposes of the state; yet considering that the main purpose of the Revolution had been to re-establish the Third Estate, this policy of destroying the popular assembly without any flagrant misconduct on the part of its members cannot be approved. Although Napoleon could compensate for the absence of such an institution by the unrivalled ability he displayed in directing the executive, his hereditary successor might not have been equally gifted or indefatigable. As to the people, they had been so tormented and harassed amidst the anarchies of the past, that despotism appeared to offer advantages when compared with the evils they had already experienced in their efforts to obtain a free government. The nation, indeed, wearied with the various

impostures and despicable cabals which, under the sounding title of new constitutions, had enjoyed a temporary popularity amidst the troubled days of the Republic, willingly yielded universal submission to a man, whose genius commanded their respect, and whose military fame flattered their historic pride. Napoleon came upon the scene when the tide of revolutionary disorder first receded from the highest point, and slowly began to ebb. Society was in a state of utter dissolution; he aspired to reconstruct it, to establish new boundaries, to rear up afresh those landmarks which the troubled waves of anarchy had overthrown and effaced. At such a crisis, a mind like his could not be mistaken or overlooked, for, independent of his pre-eminent ability as a soldier, he displayed that peculiar energy of character which almost invariably lifts up its possessor to power and command. As Junot observed of him: "Nature is remarkably sparing of such men; she only throws them upon the earth with centuries between them." Napoleon could deal with masses of men; he knew how to bring inferior minds under his subjection, and make them adopt his views. France accepted him as a soldier, and then discovered that he was a philosopher. M. Thiers correctly appreciates his rise when he says, "As the French took Buonaparte with his genius, so they would have taken him without that genius, and taken him, be he what he might, provided he was powerful, such was the need of force on the morrow of such great disorders."

Before, however, Napoleon can be censured for those

arbitrary measures by which public opinion was excluded from the exercise of any direct influence upon his government, it must be borne in mind that the nation obstinately refused to listen to his suggestions, or to follow his advice, respecting the abolition of the revolutionary laws of succession. Thus, therefore, he was in a measure precluded from establishing any solid political institutions, which could be permitted, with reasonable hopes of success, to exercise a moderate restraint upon the executive, and was compelled, if public order were to be maintained, to resort to that excessive centralisation of power, which to this hour renders the political government of France so unstable and insecure. The whole machinery of the imperial administration was kept in motion by the presence of a single wheel, consequently, if by accident this wheel became suddenly disabled or destroyed, the mechanism of the government was completely at a stand still. Everything depended upon the efficiency of this central power, which formed, as it were, the propelling force of the whole organization. "I had established," said the Emperor, "a government the most compact, carrying on its operations with the greatest rapidity, and capable of the most nervous efforts of any upon the face of the earth. The organization of the prefectures, their action and results, were truly admirable. The same impulse was given at the same instant to forty millions of men, and by the aid of these centres of local activity, the movement was as rapid at all the extremities as at the heart of the empire." This extreme centralisation of power in the executive

established by Napoleon, at a time when despotism remained the only remedy to arrest social disorganization, has never been materially modified in the subsequent organic changes which the political government of France has undergone. No municipal corporations or departmental councils elected by the people have, till recently, been established ; each functionary of the state, from the prefect of the department down to the humblest mayor, being nominated and removed at pleasure by the executive of the day. That the provincial parliaments, the provincial governments, the manorial courts, and the close corporations of the old regime, were vexatious and oppressive, as well as highly prejudicial to the advance of industry, cannot be questioned ; yet this fact affords no solid reason why more efficient local bodies should not now be appointed by popular election, upon the system of the Municipal Corporations, the Boards of Poor Law Guardians, and various other provincial assemblies in England. The concentration of authority and despotic influence which has existed for so many years in the French executive, almost affords facilities for rebellion ; since, to make a successful revolution in France, little else is required than sufficient audacity to destroy the existing executive, when its officers are labouring under a temporary unpopularity, and to replace them by substituting the chiefs of the rebel party. A member of the late Provisional Government has publicly stated that the tactics of a practical revolutionist consist in diverting the attention of the army and the people by some specious pretext, and while they are engaged

in an animated discussion upon the subject, to strike a vigorous death-blow at the executive. A telegraphic despatch announces to the departments that the form of government is changed ; the prefects, perhaps asleep at the time, are dragged out of their beds to proclaim it, and before four-and-twenty hours elapse, three-fourths of the population have given in their adhesion to the new powers. If by accident the revolt miscarries, its ill-fated leaders soon find themselves within the walls of Ham or Vincennes, and the prefects are hurrying up to Paris with addresses from the departments to congratulate their master upon his fortunate escape. This plan of substituting might for right has now become so well established in France, that from the day when Napoleon drove the Five Hundred through the windows of the Orangery at St. Cloud till the present hour, scarcely a ruler has assumed the executive power who can lay claim to any other title deeds except those of usurpation or force. During the sway of Napoleon, the army acted in complete unison with the executive ; but upon many occasions, in subsequent reigns, the soldiery have shown themselves exceedingly reluctant to defend the executive when it has been suddenly exposed to the dangers of revolutionary assault. In fact, the executive depends entirely upon the army for support, and whenever the army wavers in its allegiance, the fall of the executive, whether it be embodied under the name of a Monarch, a President, or an Emperor, is not far off.

A lofty ambition, led Napoleon to cast his eyes beyond the exigencies of the present hour. Having

formed a dynasty, he desired to perpetuate it in his family, and knowing that monarchy, without the support of aristocratic institutions, is but the vainest of shadows, he devoted his genius to create a patrician class in society, to serve as a rampart for the protection of his imperial throne. Two courses lay before him, either to recall the emigrant noblesse to court, and reinstate them in their ancient privileges and possessions, or to found a new order of nobility by conferring titles of honour upon those distinguished soldiers, whose martial genius, and heroic conduct, had been conspicuously displayed in the field of battle. Many formidable obstacles arose to prevent the former course from being adopted, since, not only were the French people inveterately prejudiced against the ancient noblesse, but revolutionary confiscation had placed it almost beyond human power to restore the landed estates to their rightful owners. £130,000,000 sterling may be estimated as the value of the confiscated property belonging to the emigrant families, and of this, not more than £28,000,000 sterling remained unsold, so that it was impossible, considering the vast number of the new proprietors, and the prodigious value of the spoil, to recover the forfeited possessions. Another difficulty existed in the fact that the interests of the disinherited nobles, being naturally identified with the Bourbon cause, they would probably have but imperfectly assimilated with the Imperial Regime. The second course was at length adopted by Napoléon, but not without calling forth considerable opposition from the people, who still retained a jealous and reluctant

feeling against the restoration of a privileged class in any shape. In March, 1808, hereditary titles of honour were re-established, the ennobled persons being permitted to entail a specific income, under the name of majorats, to their direct descendants. The favoured candidates for these princely honours were chiefly selected from the marshals of the empire, who received denominations of rank proportioned to their services in the field, and derived their revenues from estates in foreign countries, which the march of revolutionary conquest had annexed to, or incorporated with, France. An inordinate vanity respecting their character as a military nation is one of the foibles of the French people; hence Napoleon, by flattering this passion, was enabled to overcome the repugnant feelings which existed against the re-establishment of a privileged class. He saw the weak point in the fortress, and laid his plans accordingly for the siege. Having succeeded in mastering the popular opposition to his ambitious plans, he made Dukes and Princes as plentiful as blackberries; and so great was the desire to attain these titled distinctions, that the flower of the French youth rushed to his standard with the hope of acquiring them. Napoleon, feeling convinced that illustrious birth and the tenure of ancient territorial possessions formed the true *prestige* of an aristocracy, always retained a desire to re-call the old noblesse, and bring them forward to support the grandeur, and increase the dignity of the empire he had founded. The accomplishment of such a task was, however, almost beyond the power of man; he was, therefore, compelled

to remain satisfied with the formation of a military aristocracy, by conferring titles of rank upon those eminent soldiers, whose energy and valour had at least contributed to consolidate the imperial fabric they were called to adorn. But an aristocracy is not the growth of a year. It does not flourish upon the soil of revolution. To be of value as a political institution, to obtain dignity and influence, to command the respect of the people, it must be slowly matured, and gradually established. Antiquity is essential to a nobility, for then, as Lord Bacon observes, "people naturally bend to its members as born in some sort to command." The destruction of the ancient nobility of France, was the prime defect of the Revolution. The privileged orders of society required to be renovated and reformed, not to be eradicated and destroyed. Instead of pruning the branches of the tree by removing the relics of feudal oppression, the very roots of nobility were torn from the soil and dismembered. The growth of a forest is a work of time, so is that of an aristocracy. You cannot produce great families by the stroke of a pen, or the motion of a wand; and without the presence of great families in a nation, there can neither exist a permanently stable government, nor well-established liberties.

The Restoration of the Bourbons produced as usual a new Constitution for France. Louis XVIII. granted (*octroya*) the nation a charter, which, considering the surrounding difficulties of the time, appears to have been liberal and judicious in its character. The government consisted of an executive and a legislature.

The executive was vested with the king alone. He was the supreme head of the state; he commanded the forces; made treaties of peace, alliance, and commerce; nominated to all employments of public administration, and ordained regulations necessary for the execution of the laws; lastly, he possessed *the privilege of making ordinances when the safety of the state was endangered*. The legislature was composed of the King, a Chamber of Peers, and a Chamber of Deputies. The King proposed the laws to the Chambers, but before laws could be rendered valid, it was necessary to obtain the concurrence of a majority in each Chamber. The privilege of discussing laws referring to taxation before they were proposed to the Peers was reserved for the Lower Chamber. The nomination of Peers belonged to the king. He could make them hereditary, or for life only. The number of Peers was unlimited, and left to the discretion of the executive. Princes of the blood were Peers by right of birth. The Chamber of Peers could not sit after the session of the Deputies had closed. Peers could take their seats in the Chamber at twenty-five years of age, but could not vote or discuss until thirty years of age. The Chamber of Deputies consisted of 258 deputies chosen by the electoral colleges of the departments. This number being subsequently increased to 459. The Deputies were elected for five years, but in such a manner that the Chamber was reinforced one-fifth every year. A deputy was required to be forty years of age, and to pay a direct annual contribution of 1000 francs. An elector was required

to be thirty years of age, and to pay 300 francs annually in direct taxation. The deliberations of the Peers were secret, those of the Deputies public. The king was compelled to convoke the Chambers every year; he could prorogue them, and dissolve the Chamber of Deputies; but in the latter case he was bound to summon a new one by election within the space of three months. Ministers could be members of either Chamber, and had the right to enter both the Chambers and be heard when they demanded it. The Catholic Religion was declared the established religion of the state, but every person was at liberty to profess his own religion, and obtain for his creed the same protection. No one could be prosecuted or arrested except by the prescribed forms of the law. The king appointed the judges of the law courts, but could remove them at his pleasure. The institution of juries was preserved. The punishment by confiscation of property was abolished. The king had the power of pardoning offences and commuting punishments. Lastly, before any tax could be imposed, the sanction of the king, and the consent of a majority in both the Chambers, were essential. Such were the leading provisions in the Charter of 1814, intended to establish constitutional monarchy in France.

The manner in which the Restoration of the Bourbons was accomplished, has exerted a singularly unfavourable influence upon the subsequent course of French politics. The occupation of Paris by the allied armies, the reverses of Waterloo, the exile of Napoleon, the execution of Ney, and a Restoration effected

by the aid of three hundred thousand foreign bayonets, have attached a degree of unpopularity to the Bourbon name in France, which it is not easy to efface. The vast majority of the French people were ardently attached to Napoleon; and, though exhausted and dispirited at the moment of his fall, remained at heart sincerely devoted to his cause. The parties favourable to the Restoration were the Legitimists and a remnant of the Jacobins; but by far the greater proportion of the population, though silently submitting to the recall of the exiled dynasty, were anything but enthusiastic in supporting its claims. Indeed, one of the great faults of the Restoration was the fact of its being a compulsory instead of a spontaneous and voluntary act on the part of the French nation; rather the fulfilment of an article in a treaty, enforced by the victorious legions of combined Europe, than the loyal invitation of a free people to recall their banished sovereign. How widely different were the feelings with which the English people restored the Stuarts amidst the anarchies of the expiring Protectorate. It was not surrounded by the muskettoires and body-guard of Louis XIV. that Charles II. landed upon the shores of England; it was not with Turenne that he entered the palaces of Whitehall.

A spirit of conciliatory moderation was the chief characteristic of Louis XVIII. as sovereign of France. He comprehended the position in which antecedent events had placed him and shaped out a policy in conformity with the wishes of the people, over whom he was appointed to preside. Even in the stormy

assemblage of the States General, prior to the Revolution, he had, as Count de Provence, advocated liberal ideas, and earnestly supported that party whose efforts, under the guidance of Mounier, were directed to obtain constitutional monarchy in exchange for the legal despotism of the old regime. At the bureau, over which he presided, he gave the casting vote in favour of the double representation; a decisive proof of his prepossessions in favour of constitutional government. Indeed, he was far from being imbued with those fatal predilections for absolute monarchy, which, in defiance of twenty years spent in exile and misfortune, the Count d'Artois still entertained. He did not, like that infatuated prince, believe in "the right divine of kings to govern wrong." However much he might deplore the excesses of the Revolution, he was not blind to the great purpose which lay concealed and hidden beneath its crimes. He knew that the Tiers Etat must henceforth govern France; that *le roi le veut* had become an obsolete phrase.

Although Louis XVIII. ascended the throne under most unfavourable circumstances, yet by the conciliatory nature of his policy, he contrived, for a time, to soften the asperity of his opponents, and almost to attach the good wishes of all parties to the interests of the legitimate family. During his reign, the popularity of Napoleon descended to its nadir; and such an admission is no slight testimony to the merits of Louis, since one may naturally infer this was a period when the incensed feelings of the Buonapartists would be the most highly exasperated by the adverse fate of

their idolised chief. Louis XVIII. owed his success principally to the candour and frankness with which he received all parties, whatever might be the colour of their political opinions. As he often said, "he desired to be rather as Henry IV., the father of his people, than as Henry III., the chief of the Leaguers." "Les sages amis de la légitimité et de la charte," "he observed, "veulent avec moi et comme moi, le bonheur de la France, ils sont convaincus que ce bonheur est dans le repos, et que le repos ne peut naitre que de la moderation." From the commencement of his reign to its termination, almost every political measure proposed to the Chambers had a tendency to obliterate the animosities of the past. A series of large and popular concessions satisfied the liberal party, while many of the more reasonable demands of the royalists were cheerfully acceded to. The laws of amnesty were passed. The emigrants were partially indemnified for their losses. The nobility regained their titles, and even the military aristocracy of the Empire was received at court, and fused with the old noblesse. The proscriptions of the restoration were comparatively few, and the extreme penalty of the law was inflicted only upon the leading regicides or most conspicuous traitors. In a political point of view, a spirit of moderation was equally perceptible. The liberty of the press received considerable extension. The Chamber of Deputies was liberally augmented in number, and the privileges of its members expanded. Finally, the king invariably endeavoured to select his ministers from the preponderant political party which

prevailed in the Lower Chamber. If Louis showed any partiality, it was for the liberal party, headed by Richlieu, Decazes, and Dessolle; but when the Côté Droit obtained a majority in the Deputies, he accepted the services of M. Villèle. In fact the king always sought to avoid extremes; hence he endeavoured as far as was consistent, to support the juste milieu of the Chamber, rather than the democratic section led by Gregoire and Manuel, or the party that espoused the politics of the coterie in the Pavillon Marsan. The general policy of Louis XVIII. was that of a monarch who attempted to govern upon constitutional principles. He adhered strictly to the Charter of the Restoration without making any attempts to re-establish absolutism. The best evidence of his capacity is to be found in the prosperity which France attained under his rule. Within the interval of ten years the nation had well nigh repaired the evils occasioned by the Revolution. Her commerce and internal trade had improved to an unexampled extent; her population had increased; her financial condition had become prosperous and generally produced a surplus revenue; her manufactures had doubled in amount; while the products of her indirect taxation, a safe index of national prosperity, were augmented 25 per cent. between the years 1816 and 1826. If Louis XVIII. could have reigned as long as the grand monarque, it may well be questioned whether the name of revolution would be such a familiar word as it is with the present generation of Frenchmen. Even when dying, Louis foresaw the errors into which the royal-

ists would drift the monarchy, unless checked in their career. Upon the infant Duc de Bordeaux being presented to him, he prophetically exclaimed, "let Charles X. have a care for that child's crown."

Charles X. proved in every respect a monarch worthy of the old regime. One might have imagined he had been educated by Mazarin. He attempted to govern France upon the doctrines of the divine right, and inalienable power of kings, as though he had received his crown from Louis XV. in 1774 instead of Louis XVIII. in 1826. He wished to forget that the Revolution had ever occurred, and affected to treat the Chamber of Deputies with the same haughty disdain which his ancestors had assumed in the Parliaments of Paris. Like Charles I. of England, he was obstinate, fond of arbitrary power, impatient of contradiction, and never to be trusted. The accession of Charles X. at first strengthened the Royalist party, so that his early measures were constitutionally carried by majorities in the Chambers. Thirty millions of rentes in the 3 per cents, were appropriated to indemnify the emigrants for the loss of their property. The interest upon the national debt was reduced, and a judicious attempt to alter the law respecting the testamentary division of property most unwisely frustrated. Other measures followed, restricting the liberty of the press, favouring the designs of the Jesuits, and disbanding the National Guard, which soon showed the direction affairs were taking under a retrograde government. To carry a point, seventy-six peers were created in a day ; and it became evident, that France had now got a

ruler, who would resort to any stretch of prerogative rather than be defeated in his plans. The nation was daily travelling back to the constitution of the old regime. M. Martignac and his colleagues, in their short administration, plainly intimated to their royal master that only one alternative remained—"either he must bow to the Chamber, or recur to the unconstitutional power of royalty for ever alienated by the Charter, a power which, if evoked, could only be evoked once for the purpose of plunging France into new revolutions, amidst which the crown of St. Louis would disappear." By this insane conduct Charles X. rapidly sapped the foundations of the monarchy. It now became a question, whether the Charter was the property of the nation, or a gift which the king could offer and withdraw at his pleasure. Charles and the royalists answered it by publishing the *Ordonnances*; the people answered it by appearing upon the barricades. "We are sixteen in this Chamber," said Casimir Perier, "but we are thirty millions out of doors." Finding that all attempts to coerce the liberal party in the Chambers had failed, Charles X. and his minister Polignac fell back upon the fourteenth article of the Charter, which authorised the king to make *règlements et ordonnances nécessaires pour l'exécution des lois et la sûreté de l'état*. They destroyed the liberty of the press, and altered the method of electing the Chamber of Deputies in such a manner, as to ensure the return of a royalist majority. If an English sovereign at the present day abolished the House of Commons, altered the laws by proclamation, and

attempted to govern with merely the occasional aid of a Privy Council, he would only be acting as Charles X. did at this crisis. Unwilling to retract the ordinances or descend to any compromise, he persisted in attempting to carry the day by military force. Thousands of lives were sacrificed; and after a desperate struggle, in which the army acted with a loyalty worthy of a better cause, the monarchy of the Restoration perished upon the barricades of July. A Provisional Government was appointed, and a few days afterwards the Duke of Orleans ascended the throne at the invitation of the Chambers as Louis Philippe, King of the French, his prerogatives being defined in a Charter prescribed by those assemblies.

The Revolution of 1830 is by far the purest, the most justifiable, and the most legitimate of the many political changes which the French Constitution has undergone. As in the English Revolution of 1688, the Convention Parliament, resenting the despotic course pursued by James II., transferred the crown to the Prince and Princess of Orange, so did the French Chambers in 1830, from a similar cause, depose the Legitimate Family, and elect the Orleans Branch in its place. At the last moment, Charles X. abdicated the throne in favour of the Duc de Bourdeaux, nominating the Duke of Orleans Lieutenant General of the kingdom during the minority; but the Chambers preferred to erect a *royautie populaire* upon the basis of a new Charter, rather than preserve the direct line of princes who had given such offence. Nor was the Duke of Orleans himself reluctant to accept a throne

instead of a viceroyship, when the former was proffered upon such honourable terms. Louis Philippe became king of the French. Charles X. departed from Rambouillet for Holyrood. Thus the prize, which the Orleans family had for a century struggled to attain, was at length acquired, and by far more creditable means than those which Egalité and Mirabeau had used in the days of Louis XVI. As the sequel of events has proved, it would perhaps have been wiser for Louis Philippe to have assumed the guardianship of Henry V., than to have accepted the crown for the House of Orleans; but all history goes to prove, that there is nothing which men so reluctantly refuse or resign as royal power. The temptation was too strong, the opportunity too inviting to be missed. Louis Philippe entered the Tuileries with the tri-color, instead of the fleur-de-lis. He flattered himself that he had laid the foundation stone of constitutional monarchy permanently in France. The nation, equally sanguine, imagined that the gulf of revolution was for ever closed. Never did a change of dynasty promise brighter hopes, or raise greater expectations. Never did such a change in its issue prove more disheartening or more prejudicial.

Nothing apparently could seem more propitious for France, than the transition from the Bourbon to the Orleans line. The anarchy which is usually attendant upon revolution, had only lasted for a few days. The Chambers continued to exercise their functions; all the subordinate officials of the government remained at their posts, while to judge from the slight disarrange-

ment of social order which followed the revolution, it appeared as if little else than a change of ministers had occurred. Upon his accession, the new king enjoyed a high degree of popularity. Not having joined the allied armies in the Revolutionary War, or mingled with the emigrant princes at Coblenz, the people regarded him as less identified with the humiliations of 1815 than his royal predecessors. "He was at Jemappes." "He is a citizen king," resounded on all sides. "Take the Duke of Orleans for your king," said Lafitte, "liberty will be satisfied with the sacrifice of legitimacy. Order will thank you for saving it from Robespierre. England in your revolution will recognise her own."

The Charter of 1830 resembled in its essential points, the Charter of 1814. By the new articles introduced, a constitutional form of government was guaranteed; while the more objectionable clauses of the former document, such as those which authorised the executive to dispense with existing laws, and to legislate without the concurrence of the Chambers, were entirely suppressed. The French Constitution thus appeared to be gradually approximating itself to the mixed government of England, by the various improvements this new Charter effected in the political institutions of the nation. Every change which the Charter ordained was in favour of liberty; none tended to circumscribe the legitimate freedom of the people, or to impede the development of constitutional principles. The press was to enjoy as great a degree of liberty as was compatible with the laws. The censor-

ship was never to be re-established. The king could not set aside the laws, nor suspend their execution. The Chambers were to enjoy the privilege of proposing new laws, as well as the king. Any proposition brought forward, either by the Chambers or the king, if rejected, could not be brought forward again in the same session. The sittings of the Peers were ordered to be public, like those of the Deputies. The Deputies were to be elected for the space of five years, instead of one-fifth by rotation every year. A deputy could sit at thirty, instead of forty years of age. An elector could vote at twenty-five, instead of thirty years of age. *Peers could only be made for life.* The Presidents of the Colleges Electoreaux were to be chosen by the electors, instead of the king. The President of the Chamber of Deputies was to be elected by the members, instead of the king. Such were the leading alterations effected by the Charter of 1830, alterations which, with some few exceptions, promised well for France.

Having treated of the Revolution of 1848 in a separate paper, we shall not pause here to investigate the various causes which led to the fall of the Orleans dynasty, and plunged the nation once more into the fatal abyss of revolutionary ruin; yet, before concluding, it will be well to direct the reader's attention to the fact, that the want of a territorial aristocracy, has been the principal cause of those fiery conflicts, which, for half a century, have rendered the political history of France little better than one continued civil war.

The English Revolution of 1640 was happily less destructive in its course than that of 1789 in France. Hence, when the Restoration of the Stuarts came to be accomplished, the nobility and the country gentlemen found themselves, with few exceptions, in possession of their estates, as well as their ancient territorial influence. They entered Parliament just as they had done previous to the Revolution, and soon regained their former position in the direction of public affairs. With France the case was widely different, for there the popular party had striven as eagerly to destroy the privileged orders as they had to limit the prerogatives of the crown. The Revolution of 1789 swept away every vestige of nobility. The nobles themselves were expelled, to wander as emigrants over Europe. The sudden abolition of all feudal rights on the 4th of August, 1789, levelled the whole fabric of aristocratic power to the ground. The suppression of titles by the infamous decree of June, 1790, destroyed the artificial distinction of classes, and introduced the reign of equality. Finally, the revolutionary laws of succession completed the work of demolition, by effectually precluding the possibility of either reconstructing or maintaining an influential landed aristocracy for the future. Many of these changes, such as the mitigation of seigniorial rights, and the forfeiture of that exemption from taxation which the privileged orders so reluctantly resigned, would, if gradually introduced, have been highly beneficial; but so blindly fanatic in their enthusiastic pursuit of liberty were the revolutionary leaders, that

not only did they miss the purpose they had in view, but perished victims of their own misguided and criminal ambition. If we lament the fate of the Girondins, if we admire the genius, the heroism, and the intrepidity they displayed in the Convention and upon the scaffold, we must not the less remember that they were the party who surrendered power to the multitude, and who by the fervour of their eloquence first inspired the democrat with audacity to attempt the work of devastation and ruin. In their sublime fall we forget the errors they committed. For them an heroic death has expiated many faults and atoned for many crimes.

The system upon which the ancient aristocracy of France was based prior to the Revolution, unquestionably offered many obstacles to impede the progress of civilisation and obstruct the industry of the people. An exclusive distinction claimed by its members, excited the hatred and jealousy of the inferior classes of society; while the absurd remnants of feudalism, which the privileged orders retained, not only impoverished the cultivators of the soil, but retarded the progress of agriculture as well. The nobility of the old regime stood apart from the people, like the *caste* of an oriental nation. The line of demarcation between the noble and the *roturier* had been so strictly defined by an absurd system of etiquette, that the bourgeoisie and the merchants could not obtain that consideration in society to which by their wealth and intelligence they were justly entitled. Hence, no middle class could be said to exist, and 150,000

persons, privileged by rank and birth, became placed in the balance against twenty millions of the people. Thus it was the misfortune of the French aristocracy that their order had been rendered perfectly exclusive by the maintenance of laws, the tenor of which was wholly at variance with the intelligence of a modern era. No free circulation existed between the different grades of society. Profligacy and vice did not descend—genius, talent, and virtue, could not ascend. All the children of the nobles preserved almost the same privileges and rank as the elder born, and formed a separate class of the community. They enjoyed a monopoly of honours, and having usurped every office, in the gift of the crown, they looked with haughty jealousy upon every inferior, however brilliant might be his genius, or however meritorious his career. This impassable barrier, for a time, stemmed back the tide of revolution. At length the swelling flood burst through, and swept the whole away.

In attempting to establish constitutional monarchy since the Restoration of 1815, this utter annihilation of the ancient aristocracy has formed one of the most serious obstacles, for it may be regarded almost as an impossibility to maintain monarchy, unless that institution be surrounded by privileged classes of society enjoying great distinctions of property and rank, as well as exercising a very considerable influence in the direction of the government. Aristocratic institutions form the buttresses which support a throne; and when they are imperfect, the edifice is seldom stable or secure. As to the Chamber of Peers, which existed

from 1815 to 1848, but little could be expected from an assembly constructed upon such principles, and composed of such materials. The Peers being appointed by the crown for life, were naturally so many pensioned nominees; and as they possessed neither large landed estates nor any provincial influence, they remained so dependent upon the crown, that their decisions appeared to be rather an echo of the sovereign's individual feelings than the voice of an independent body. Had an hereditary peerage existed in France at the period of the recent revolution, the dynasty would not have been so easily overthrown; for it is one of the most essential advantages of a privileged nobility deriving its authority from hereditary descent, that it forms a force interposed between the people and the crown to prevent either of these powers from encroaching upon the other's jurisdiction. The late Peerage in France unfortunately stood upon no sound foundations, hence, at the hour of trial, it formed no protection to shield the crown from the sudden gust of popular passion. In truth, the errors of the Revolution of 1789, were far too great and too enduring to admit the growth of an aristocracy for the future; and, until those errors are corrected, we fear that any government in France, however nicely its functions and privileges may be traced upon codes or charters, will, to use the expressive phrase of M. Montalembert, be perpetually at the mercy of a surprise. By the continual subdivision of property, which the revolutionary laws of succession ordain, it is utterly impossible to maintain any political body,

whose members enjoy the possession of large territorial estates. The Peers of the Chamber, under the late dynasty, were, it is true, required on creation to entail a fortune upon the title; but this provision could, upon application to the crown, be dispensed with, and even when carried out was paltry and insignificant in amount. Imperfect, however, as we deem the constitution of the French Peerage to have been, it had existed for thirty years, and as time is important in giving stability to political institutions, it is melancholy to reflect, that another generation has been lost in a vain and fruitless attempt to re-establish aristocracy in France. An aristocracy destined to command popular respect, cannot be created in France, until the laws of primogeniture are introduced, for one might as well attempt to build a fleet of ships in a country where all the forests had been cut down for half a century, as to frame a nobility from families, whose property is almost certain to be subdivided with every generation, and distributed at every death.

During the interval between the Restoration of 1815 and the fall of Louis Philippe, France was governed by the bourgeoisie. Defrauded of their victory in 1792 over the privileged classes, by the violence of their democratic allies, it was not until after the close of Napoleon's military despotism, that the reign of the bourgeoisie commenced. As in 1792 they destroyed the nobility, so in 1848 the people have destroyed them. They have at length discovered the truth of Vergniaud's exclamation, that "Revolutions, like Saturn, devour their own children." During

the reign of Louis Philippe, the preponderant power of the state rested in the Chamber of Deputies, the Minister of the day having been always selected from the political party which could command a majority in this assembly ; and as the members of the Lower Chamber were principally elected by the bourgeoisie of the large towns, we shall not widely err in attributing to this class the chief direction of public affairs under the Orleans regime. Many defects may be pointed out in the constitution and practices of the Chamber, which, though not of vital importance, might have been judiciously amended. In the first place, owing to the great subdivision of landed estates, few properties were sufficiently large to qualify the proprietor for the elective franchise ; hence the agricultural class, though incomparably the most extensive interest in France, was but inadequately represented. This deficiency became farther aggravated by the fact that many of the country gentlemen, or *grands propriétaires*, were strongly attached to the Legitimist cause, and hence refused to take any active part in the legislative business of the state. The absence of such an influential and important class in the Chamber, subtracted much from the popularity and efficiency of the institution, since it not only left a very large proportion of the people imperfectly represented, but identified the decisions of the Chamber too palpably with the interests of the municipal population. Montesquieu has remarked, that large territorial proprietors, when entrusted with the exercise of political power, generally show a greater degree of moderation than

any other class; and all experience goes to verify the truth of this observation. From the long possession of authority, and from the natural manner in which it is transmitted by hereditary descent, a landed aristocracy become habituated to the use of power, and prove far less oppressive when placed in command, than do those *nouveaux riches* who imagine their importance in society increased by showing a dictatorial and tyrannical spirit when elevated to official station. In England, at the present day, there exists a general prejudice against the landed proprietary taking an active part in legislative matters, yet it would be difficult to point out any class of the community who are more eligible to undertake such duties, or who show such deference and respect to men of real and acknowledged ability. Sir James Mackintosh, a writer who cannot be accused of entertaining oligarchical predilections, observes, when noticing the circumstance of Horner's death being mentioned in the House of Commons, "Lord Lascelles at the head of the country gentlemen of England closed this affecting, improving, and most memorable scene by declaring that if the sense of the House could have been taken on this occasion, it would have been unanimous. I may say without exaggeration that never were so many words uttered without the least suspicion of exaggeration; and that never was so much honour paid in any age or nation to intrinsic claims alone. A Howard introduced, and an English House of Commons adopted, the proposition of thus honouring the memory of a man of thirty-eight, the son of a shopkeeper, who never filled an

office, or had the power of obliging a living creature ; and whose grand title to this distinction was the belief of his virtue. How honourable to the age and to the House ! A country where such sentiments prevail is not ripe for destruction." And this tributary praise, be it remembered, was offered at a period when democracy had not made that progress which it has done of late, and when the landed interest predominated in the House of Commons much more than it does at present.

The number of placemen in the Chamber was another imperfection that required alteration. No less than 150 out of the 459 deputies filled official capacities, and invariably supported the ministry, however strong might be their personal objections to the measures proposed. Such a host of votes, which could always be calculated upon as certain, enabled the Ministerial party frequently to run counter to public opinion, because the government had the power of showing a numerical majority in the Chamber, long after public feeling out of doors was decisively expressed against them. In Walpole's time the English House of Commons laboured under a similar defect, no less than 200 out of 500 members being placemen who received pensions from the Minister of the day. Another fault consisted in the fact that magistrates entrusted with important judicial functions were permitted to enter the Chamber and take part in political discussions ; a course which manifestly rendered the administration of justice less perfect and less impartial, when cases, having a political bearing, came to be

decided in the courts of law. Lastly, the principle upon which the elective franchise was granted, reduced the constituencies of the Colleges to such limited numbers, that the popular demand for a lower electoral qualification was not without reason. Considering the manner in which property is subdivided—£8 paid in direct taxation excluded the vast bulk of the population from all chance of obtaining a voice in the popular representation; thus, only 240,000 enjoyed the elective privilege in the choice of deputies out of 8,000,000 adult males. That the number of electors might have been materially increased without endangering the stability of the monarchy, we think the best friends of the fallen dynasty will now admit.

In spite of these imperfections, however, the Chamber produced many eminent statesmen, and able legislators. M. M. Guizot, Thiers, and De Tocqueville, are men that would do honour to any deliberative assembly of the age; and other names hardly less conspicuous for profound acquirements might be also instanced. Indeed, the present legislature of France almost wholly derives its lustre from men who had risen to an illustrious renown under the defunct monarchy, just as in the Constituent Assembly of 1789, Mirabeau, Talleyrand, Sieyes, and others, had been educated under the old regime. The annihilation of the Chamber of Deputies must ever be regarded as one of the most unfortunate events that have happened to modern France. It has arrested the march of true freedom, and thrown French legislation back to the chimerical experiments of the Revolutionary era. As a political

institution, the Chamber was far from faultless, but it afforded a considerable amount of liberty, and served at least as a tolerable channel to convey the expression of public feeling to the councils of the executive. Inferior to the House of Commons it might be, yet it was open to improvement, and capable of being more and more assimilated to the forms and practices of that assembly. After such an institution has been destroyed, what legislative body can be considered secure in France? If a nation will permit a mere band of political adventurers to disorganise the very temple of social order, and,

“ Like the baseless fabrick of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind,”

what encouragement, what hope, what security can there be for the future? Is it to be supposed that the present Constitution, improvised amidst bayonets and written upon drum heads, in a state of siege, will be more durable than its predecessors? Can we presume that it will be exempt from the common lot? If, during a single life, seventeen of these constitutions have been inaugurated and destroyed, why should we anticipate for the present one a more propitious career? No wonder Talleyrand perjured himself thirteen times in swearing fidelity to Consuls and Constitutions. We have no faith in these marvellous institutions which spring up like oriental palaces in a single night. Like the house mentioned in Scripture, they are built upon the sand, and when the winds come and the waves rise, they are no more to be seen. Nothing short of the greatest presumption, and an utter ignorance of

mankind, could induce men to believe that they can frame a perfect political constitution for a nation, as easily as they can sit down to write their silly decrees upon paper. All sound, all temperate, all free government, must take its rise from institutions which have been from time to time modified and adapted to the wants of the people for whom they are intended. It is only by degrees that the political constitution of a nation can be formed; by the gentle alteration of imperfections when they are clearly proved to be such, by the patient endurance of minor evils when they are inevitable, or when the cost of removing them would exceed the disadvantage of suffering them to exist. The British constitution has been a work of time. It has survived many ordeals and many trials. If we look back a century, we shall perceive that it was then far from perfect. The two first Georges were highly unpopular. The House of Commons was filled with placemen. The House of Lords had obtained too great an ascendancy. Yet the English people did not scatter these institutions to the winds, they did not call in the Pretender, or set up legislative assemblies to jabber about the rights of man. No, they were wiser in their generation, and they have had their reward.

The fall of the bourgeoisie may be ascribed in a great measure to the intestine discords which prevailed amongst that class, respecting the relative claims of the various aspirants to dynastic power. Had no rival family been in existence to contest the throne with the House of Orleans, the Revolution of February,

1848, would probably have terminated in an unsuccessful *emeute*. The apathy evinced by the Legitimist and Bonapartist sections of the bourgeoisie at that momentous period, however, led to very different results. It sealed the fate of the monarchy, and enabled the republicans to obtain an easy victory. This fatal schism amongst the upper classes of society paralysed the arm of the executive, and caused both the army and the national guard to show disloyalty to the crown. Beneath the specious pretext of a demand for electoral reform, lay concealed a burning passion for dynastic change. With such a host of combined foes arrayed against them, the Orleanists were too numerically weak to contest the day. The Republicans and the Socialists commenced the Revolution; the Legitimists and the Bonapartists, instead of assisting the Orleanists to suppress it, looked quietly on the scene with indifference at least, if not with secret satisfaction. "Atque is habitus animorum fuit, ut pessimum facinus auderent pauci, plures vellent, omnes paterentur." Half the energy displayed by the bourgeoisie in June, would have saved the monarchy in February. As to the pure republicans, the republicans *de la Veille*, they form but a mere fraction of the nation, certainly not a sixth, and only occupy their present position because the dynastic combatants desire to halt and recruit their forces before the conflict is renewed. Prior to the Revolution of February these dynastic jealousies appeared to be slowly fading away. Seventeen years of possession seemed to have given the Orleans dynasty an undisputed supremacy over

its rivals. The Orleanists were in authority ; the Legitimists began to despair of Henry V. The Bonapartists, depressed by the reverses of Strasburgh and Boulogne, were not aware of their strength, while the Republicans thought power utterly beyond their reach. The Revolution has not only infused fresh life into these various parties, by renewing their hopes and stimulating their energies, but has thrown another ingredient, under the name of Socialism, into the fiery caldron of civil discord. Each of these parties now look forward with confidence, and cherish the idea that they shall one day be able to reign by exterminating their rivals, or driving them from the field. The Orleanists think their cause will regain the ascendancy, when the Legitimists become merged into their party by the death of the Duc de Bourdeaux. The Legitimists hope that the people, wearied with the mockeries of the Republic, will revert to Monarchy and recall their ancient line of Princes. The Bonapartists, elated with the signal success of the Presidential election, and flattered by the *quasi* monarchical proceedings of their candidate at the Elysée Bourbon, will be endeavouring in 1852 to revive the Empire. The Republicans hold possession, which is always considered nine points of the law, while the Socialists, dignified by forming the opposition in the assembly, naturally suppose that when the ruling party falls into discredit, or becomes dissolved by faction, their own leaders will cross the floor and take office. Thus, the Revolution has produced incalculable mischief, by resuscitating parties, that five years ago had not the

slightest idea of ever being permitted to reappear upon the stage as candidates for power, or even to mention their claims aloud without the hazard of proscription and exile.

If the French people obstinately persist in retaining upon their statute book such laws to regulate the inheritance of landed and personal property, as utterly preclude the possibility of constructing a territorial aristocracy, or of maintaining an influential and wealthy bourgeoisie, a military despotism, veiled under the disguise of a nominal Republic, remains the only form of government that can be useful or applicable to their condition. As to the reproduction of a Constitutional Monarchy, or an Empire with representative assemblies and popular institutions, while the present revolutionary law of succession remains in force, it is, we believe, impossible. Such designs, if entertained, and entertained they are, must prove utterly fruitless and vain. Dynasties, based upon so slender a foundation, would only be set up to be pulled down again. Attempts of this kind would only be labour in vain. Well may M. Guizot exclaim, "We have tried everything—Republic, Empire, Constitutional Monarchy. We are beginning our experiments anew." If the present vicious system of centralisation be not modified and rendered less baneful by the establishment of local corporations and provincial assemblies, enjoying a certain degree of authority independent of the government, such as the appointment of their own officers, and the administration of their own finances, there will be no prospect of attain-

ing anything worthy of the name of Liberty in France. To show the utility of these independent corporations, we need only refer to the Bank of France, an institution which has not only steered safely between the Scylla and Charybdis of Revolution, but by the assistance it had the means of affording the state, actually saved the Republic from bankruptcy and ruin. Under the present system of centralisation, the state has nearly a million offices at its disposal, and to such an extent does this evil increase, that the greater part of the population, instead of relying upon their own exertions and abilities, become political partisans to obtain a place, and thus shelter themselves under the bounty and protection of the government. The executive, constantly surrounded by numberless claimants whom it is impossible to gratify, daily throws off a spawn of dissatisfied and rejected candidates, who, for want of better employment, turn conspirators and rebels. Indeed, it is often considered one of the most promising qualifications for an official in France, if it can be proved that before making application he has figured upon a barricade, or shown some conspicuous audacity in heading a revolt. As a recent writer has aptly enough remarked : " Centralisation has now fairly accomplished the domestication of revolution in France.

We are at a loss to discover what benefits the French people have derived from their most recent Revolution. Instead of Constitutional Monarchy, they have a Republic, which five-sixths of them, if put to the test, would immediately repudiate. Instead of a single recognised dynasty, they have three that now enjoy

strong presumptive claims, and only await a favourable opportunity to upset the existing order of things. Instead of a great sovereign and an able minister, they have had for rulers a succession of political charlatans, who, with the exception of the President, and one or two others, have made the nation ridiculous in the eyes of Europe. Instead of legislative Chambers, which were worthy of the name of Senates, they now have assemblies that might often be fairly likened to a bear-garden or a cock-pit. The liberty of the press is rather restricted to more narrow bounds than enlarged. The working classes of the population are deeply tainted with the poison of Socialism; and having gained political power by the introduction of universal suffrage, will not willingly resign it again. Lastly, the ease with which the Orleans dynasty was expelled, has given fresh audacity and encouragement to conspirators who may attempt future plots, or hope to do so with the same impunity. In a financial point of view, the condition of France has equally suffered by the change. The burdens of taxation have increased; the resources from whence the revenue is derived have diminished; the public debt has augmented; public credit is more precarious; while the expenditure of the state, so far from being more economical, has become ruinously extravagant. Thus,

THE EXPENDITURE WAS		A TAXATION OF	
In 1815.....	£41,000,000	requiring	£1 8s. 0d. per head.
In 1847.....	£62,000,000	„	£1 13s. 0d. per head.
In 1848.....	£72,000,000	„	£2 0s. 0d. per head.

The revenue returns indicate an equally unfavourable appearance, Thus,

In 1815 the taxes produced	820,000,000 francs.
In 1848	676,000,000 francs.
In 1849	701,000,000 francs.

Again, the produce of the octroi of Paris, which affords a tolerably good index of public prosperity or retrogression,

FRANCS.	
In 1826 amounted to	31,000,000. (The Restoration.)
In 1830	26,000,000. (The July Revolution.)
In 1841	34,000,000. (The Guizot Ministry.)
In 1848	26,000,000. (The February Revolution.)

The navigation returns, another test of commercial activity, shew results equally unpromising. Thus,

VESSELS.	TONS.
In 1847, 21,000 entered the French ports, or	2,779,000.
In 1848, 6,999	950,000.
In 1849, 15,323	1,890,000.

These statistical details might be multiplied *ad infinitum*, but we think sufficient have been here brought forward, to prove at what a costly sacrifice France has been carrying on her experiments upon political government. Revolutions always entail great immediate suffering, and embarrass, for a time, the finances of a nation in which they occur. That of England in 1688, reduced the produce of the revenue materially for a few years, yet the advantages which followed more than counterbalanced the loss thus sustained. In France, at the present time, we fear the most unprejudiced observer can hardly see any prospective hopes of such an amelioration succeeding the Revolution, as will in the slightest degree compensate for the terrible vicissitudes which the people have latterly experienced. Everything hitherto has gone

to prove, that the Revolution was a ruinous, an ill-advised, and most disastrous experiment, certain to entail an infinity of evils upon France, with only the faint prospect of eventually producing a few advantages of a very doubtful and problematical character.

Although the great majority of the French people, and more especially of the educated classes, thoroughly abhor the detestable principles of Socialism, yet it cannot be denied but that these pernicious and subversive doctrines have latterly rather gained than lost adherents. Upon the occasion of the Presidential Election, M. Ledru Rollin, the Socialist candidate, scarcely numbered half-a-million supporters, while an analysis of the election which produced the Legislative Assembly in May, 1849, gives the Socialists 230 votes, a number that, considering the suffrages lost upon unsuccessful candidates, could not have been returned by less than a million and a half of the whole population. This increase may, perhaps, partly be accounted for by the fact, that many of the Socialists in the rural districts, had laid aside their democratic opinions upon hearing the magic sound of the Napoleon name. In Paris, Lucien Murat, two years since, was returned for that city at the head of the poll as a *modéré*, while upon two very recent occasions in the present year, the Socialists have been elected there by considerable majorities. It is a remarkable fact, that in the election of the present Legislative Assembly, the Moderate party were principally chosen by those districts in which civilisation is the most developed, in which industry is the most apparent, and in which commer-

cial enterprise has obtained the greatest expansion ; while in those departments where the inferior population are exceedingly illiterate, where manufactural developement has made the least progress, and where agricultural property is minutely subdivided, the Socialists were pretty uniformly successful. Thus, on the northern and western sea-coast, every department from Picardy to the Lower Pyrenees, with the single exception of the Lower Charente, returned men attached to moderate principles. Again, in the eighteen departments of the north, where civilisation has made the greatest progress, 195 members out of 213 belong to the moderate section of the assembly ; and even of the eighteen Socialists returned, ten represent Paris, a city where the dangerous classes, as they are termed, largely abound. In the central and eastern departments Socialism has its stronghold and retains the ascendancy—thus, Cher, Corrèze, Creuse, Isère, Rhône, Allier, Ain, and Drôme, uniformly select Socialists as their representatives. The moderate party, when compact, comprises more than two-thirds of the assembly, so that, even with universal suffrage, the advocates of sound political principles, and the zealous supporters of order, still predominate. So long as this party remains coherent, and free from dynastic dissensions, there is little to fear from the Socialist minority ; yet if the majority should unhappily split into rival factions, it is even possible that the Socialists may, for a limited period, obtain the preponderance, and create an inconceivable amount of misery for France.

The chief characteristics of Socialism are intense

selfishness, and a rebellious impatience of control. The Socialist desires to eradicate all social grades and distinctions, in order that he may possess without labour, acquire without industry, and enjoy without toil. In his reckless temerity he disregards the ordinary laws of nature, which require the soil to be cultivated, and the seed to be sown, before the blossom can be unfolded or the fruit produced. He aspires to occupy the tribune of authority, not by displaying talents that would render him worthy to merit such an elevation, but by defrauding others of their justly earned titles to govern and command. Instead of confiding to his own powers and relying upon his own exertions, instead of attempting to ascend the social scale by patient industry and indomitable perseverance, he wishes to convert society into a lottery, and, like a desperate gambler, to stake everything upon the hazard of a die. Hence his intense hatred of all durable distinctions, his jealousy of superiors in rank, his aversion to privilege, his envy of those who have outstripped him in the acquisition of honours and renown. Hence the satisfaction with which he observes every venerable and ancient institution of society swept down and overwhelmed, by the impetuous flood of democratic equality. Hence his desire to blot out, to annihilate every species of aristocracy, whether it be the representative of birth, of talent, or of virtue. He disregards the past—he is indifferent to the future; all that he asks is the present enjoyment of sensual pleasures, an unrestrained indulgence of the lowest animal passions, and a gratification of the most vulgar desires. It is

against those who inculcate and support these infamous doctrines that society in France is now imperatively called upon to make a determined stand. It is against this new barbarism, this impending evil, this threatened anarchy, that all who have a heart to feel, or an arm to raise, must unite to save their common country from ruin and desolation. Whatever may have been the dissensions of the past, they must be obliterated and forgotten. Society itself is menaced and in danger. The time for compromise has passed away. Error must be confronted in the tribune, and combatted in the street. The contest between civilisation and barbarism has commenced. On the one side are ranged those who desire to maintain social order, to encourage virtue, to defend religion, to render society durable by recognising the great institutions of family and property, and to teach mankind that it is their pride, their privilege, and their prerogative, to emulate, to aspire, and to excel. On the other side stand the sworn enemies to those sacred and eternal laws of human nature, which, if they were abolished, must plunge society into the depths of a savage barbarism, must break down the basis and superstructure of civilisation, must dissolve the bonds of authority, obedience, and order, and, finally, destroy the very foundation stone upon which man's highest destiny in this world is intended to stand and to endure.

Let us conclude, then, by expressing a fervent hope that Socialism has already began to recede from its culminating point, that its impious doctrines emanating as they do, not altogether from credulity and

ignorance, but from knowledge ill-directed, and human reason perversely misapplied, will at least be circumscribed and limited to their present sphere. The extinction of so wide-spread an error, we cannot dare to anticipate, for it is vain to expect that the world will ever exist without the presence of those ambitious, yet giddy minds, who, presumptuously attempting to penetrate the very arcana of Providence, imagine that their limited vision can search farther than the eye of Infinite Wisdom. To such, indeed, we may well address the rebuke—

Go wiser thou, and in thy scale of sense
 Set thy opinion against Providence.
 Call imperfection what thou fanciest such—
 Say, here He gives too little, there too much;
 Strike from His hand the balance and the rod—
 Rejudge His justice—be the God of God.

SIR JOHN DENHAM.

THE early life of this eminent poet is involved in great obscurity. He was born at Dublin, in the year 1615, the only son of Sir John Denham of Essex, then Chief Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland, and one of the Lords Justices of that kingdom. His mother was Eleanor, daughter of Sir Garret More, Baron of Mellefont.

About two years afterwards, Sir John being appointed a Baron of the Court of Exchequer in England, the family removed to London, where young Denham received a grammatical education to prepare him for college.

In the year 1631, he was entered a gentleman commoner of Trinity College, Oxford, where, says Wood, he was looked upon by his seniors and contemporaries as, "a slow and dreaming young man, given more to cards and dice than to study, so that they could never then in the least imagine he would ever live to enrich the world with his fancy or the issue of his brain as he afterwards did." Aubrey relates, that "he would game extremely, and that when his money was gone, he would play away his father's caps wrought with gold." However, after residing for three years at the University, Denham underwent his examination and obtained his degree as Bachelor of Arts.

From Oxford he removed to Lincoln's Inn, where he applied himself to the study of the law, being intended for that profession, probably from the idea that his father's interest at court would procure his advancement. It is not difficult to imagine, that a man of wit like Denham, would prefer the pleasures of society to the prosy details of forensic research; and as the restraint of preceptors was now removed, he acquired by habit such a taste for conviviality and gaming, that all hopes of his attaining eminence in the law were at an end. After being seriously reproved by his father and threatened with disinheritance, he professed repentance, and wrote an *Essay on Gaming* to prove that his conversion was sincere. Disliking the study of the law, he now turned his attention to the Muses, and translated the second book of the *Æneid*, a performance which, though strikingly inferior to the verses of Dryden upon the same subject, displayed some promise of his future powers.

While studying at Lincoln's Inn, his associates were not of the most creditable character; one of his biographers remarking that he was then much rooked by gamesters, and fell acquainted with that unsanctified crew to his ruin. Indeed, his life at this period appears to have displayed all that irregularity and improvidence which so commonly distinguish literary men, and which either confine them to garrets or transfer them to a debtor's prison. Instead of poring over Coke, or making a digest from Fortescue, he was generally to be found playing at New Cut, in a tavern, or taking part in some midnight frolic. Upon one occasion we

are told, that being merry late at night, a whim came into his head to get some ink and a plasterer's brush to blot out all the signs between Temple Bar and Charing Cross, which made a strange confusion the next day, it being Term Time.

His father dying in 1638, he inherited the family property, but notwithstanding his Essay and the professions of the past, he returned to his former vice, and dissipated a legacy of several thousand pounds that he had received. Shortly after this event, he began to aim at obtaining a literary reputation, and as the Puritans had not yet succeeded in proscribing dramatic entertainments, Denham attempted to gain a hearing upon the stage. In 1641, his tragedy, the *Sophy*, was acted in a private house at Blackfriars with such success, that Waller, who admired the piece, good-naturedly declared, "the author had broken out like the Irish Rebellion, three-score thousand strong, when nobody in the least suspected it."

The Civil War commencing soon afterwards, Denham who had estates at Egham, was pricked as high sheriff of Surry, and appointed governor of Farnham Castle, but finding himself a very indifferent captain from not understanding military tactics, he resigned his charge and retired to join the King at Oxford.

At this city, in 1643, he published "*Cooper's Hill*," a poem, which forms the corner stone of his fame, and which even amidst the flood of modern poetry has never lost the favour of public esteem. Dryden remarked of this work, that, "for majesty of style, it is, and ever will be, the standard of good writing," while

Pope in his "Windsor Forest" has commended the Muse of Denham with equal praise.

"On Cooper's Hill eternal wreaths shall grow,
While lasts the mountain or while Thames shall flow ;
Here his first lays majestic Denham sung,
There the last numbers flowed from Cowley's tongue.
Who now shall charm the shades, where Cowley strung
His living harp, and lofty Denham sung? "

From this poem Denham's reputation so rapidly increased, that unsuccessful and jealous writers endeavoured to defraud him of the honours he had acquired, by insinuating that he had purchased the copy from a clergyman for forty pounds. But this is an assault to which original genius has in all ages been exposed.

What poet would not grieve to see
His brother write as well as he.

In the "Session of the Poets," Denham might discover the truth of Pope's saying, that "the life of a wit is a warfare upon earth," and might find that a writer, however successful, will always have a friend to remind him of things he desires to be forgotten.

Then in came Denham, that limping old bard,
Whose fame on the Sophy and Cooper's Hill stands,
And brought many stationers who swore very hard,
That nothing sold better except 'twere his lands.

But Apollo advised him to write something more
To clear a suspicion which troubled the court,
That Cooper's Hill, bragged of so much before,
Was writ by a vicar who had forty pounds for it.

Towards the conclusion of the Civil War, Denham became attached to the service of the Queen, and in 1647 she entrusted him to carry a message to the King, who was then a captive in the hands of the army. Being acquainted with Hugh Peters, he so far

overcame the scruples of that fanatic as to gain admittance to the King, who received him with great condescension and requested him to undertake the management of his correspondence. A discovery of Cowley's hand-writing by the government, however, obliged Denham to relinquish this office.

In 1648 he was employed to convey the Duke of York from London to France, where Denham rejoined the Queen, and was again admitted into her service. Whilst residing at the exiled court, he undertook a curious mission to Poland, to obtain supplies for the Royal Family from the Scots who traded to that kingdom. He has recorded in a poem that he returned back with £10,000 from this embassy, but such an amount appears incredible, unless the Scots abroad are very different from the Scots at home. Denham was exactly the companion for his voluptuous master, the Prince of Wales, and it is to the credit of Charles that he did not in the hour of returning fortune suffer the friend of his adversity to remain unrewarded.

About the year 1652 Denham returned to England, where, what with gaming and the Civil Wars, his paternal estate was so much reduced, that he was compelled to accept an invitation to reside with Lord Pembroke at Wilton until his affairs could be arranged. Under the roof of this hospitable nobleman he remained about twelve months, spending part of the time in London and part in the country.

During the Civil War, George Withers the poet had begged Denham's estate of the Parliament, in whose cause he was serving as Captain. It happened that

Withers was subsequently taken prisoner, and in danger of his life, for having written against the King. Denham then repaid his friend by requesting Charles not to hang him, for that while Withers lived he should not be the worst poet in England. Withers, however, was far from being so contemptible a writer as Denham thought him. We know of hardly anything more exquisite than the lines written by him in the Fleet Prison, describing the consolations of poetry.

"Poetry, thou sweet'st content
That e'er Heaven to mortals lent,
Though they as a trifle leave thee,
Whose dull thoughts cannot conceive thee,
Though thou be to them a scorn,
That to nought but earth are born,
Let my life no longer be
Than I am in love with thee.
Though our wise ones call thee madness,
Let me never taste of sadness
If I love not thy maddest fits
Above all their greatest wits.
And though some too seeming holy
Do account thy raptures folly,
Thou dost teach me to contemn
What makes knaves and fools of them."

Unlike Dryden, Waller, and others, Denham paid no servile homage to Protector Cromwell, but preserved his loyalty spotless and unblemished until brighter days arrived. Nor was this constancy without its reward, for at the Restoration King Charles appointed him Surveyor of the Royal Works, and at the Coronation conferred upon him the dignity of knighthood. He appears to have gained discretion by his adversities, for Wood says that he possessed seven thousand pounds

shortly after his appointment. On his promotion to office he seems to have designed the repair of his fortunes, giving over poetical lines, as he quaintly remarks, to draw such others as might be more serviceable to his majesty and he hoped more lasting. Evelyn, in his diary, speaks of going to consult Sir John Denham about the new palace at Greenwich. It appears that they differed respecting the site; "He wanting," says Evelyn, "to put it on piles at the very edge of the water, to which I did not assent, knowing Sir John to be a much better poet than architect." Butler ridicules the knight's buildings—

"For had the stones, (like his) charmed by your verse,
Built up themselves, they could not have done worse."

His finances having become prosperous from the proceeds of this office, Sir John commenced the erection of a mansion next the Dunkirk House of Lord Clarendon, which made that nobleman so unpopular. Full of honours, and well received at Court, the poet now turned his attention to matrimony, and married Miss Brooks, a very beautiful young lady of eighteen, as though he wished to confirm by example the truth of what he had formerly written against unequal matches and jealous husbands. Misfortunes soon followed, for the Duke of York, who had paid some attention to Lady Denham before her ill-advised marriage, now redoubled his condescensions and renewed his gallantries to the great annoyance of the poet.

To escape from the dilemma in which he was placed Sir John kept his wife travelling through England, but the love which the Duke had kindled in her bosom

put an end to all conjugal felicity and domestic peace. At this conjuncture the poet is reported to have been insane, but it remains questionable whether his madness ever amounted to anything beyond the madness of jealousy induced by the Duke's indecorous conduct to his lady. In 1666 they returned to Court, where Pepys remarks that he saw the Duke of York taking Lady Denham aside, and talking to her in the sight of all the world and all alone. "Mr. Evelyn," says he, "cries out loudly against it, and calls it bickering; for the Duke talks a little to her, then she goes away, and then he follows her again." Lady Denham was, however, probably not more imprudent in her behaviour than many others in this Paphian Court, where the beauty of the ladies was, we fear, much more to be commended than the purity of their morals.

A portrait of this fascinating woman, by the pencil of Lely, still adorns the palace of Hampton Court, where she loses nothing by comparison with that galaxy of beauty in which she is far from being the least conspicuous ornament. The lineaments of her charming features yet attest the painter's skill, and shine under his glowing tints in all their former loveliness and grace; for she was one of those nymphs from whom he caught the reigning character, and as Pope happily expressed it,

"upon the animated canvass stole
The sleepy eye that spoke the melting soul."

This lady dying after a short illness, in 1667, Sir John was accused of having poisoned her from feelings of jealousy and disappointment; but as few persons of

note were then suddenly removed from the world without suspicions of poison being raised, no importance can be attached to the imputation. The Duchess of York was also charged with the same offence. This, however, could only be the mere rumour of idle gossips about the Court.

That public attention was directed to the possibility of such a crime having been committed is certain, for Grammont in his *Memoirs* observes, "as no one entertained any doubt but that Sir John poisoned her, the populace of his neighbourhood had a design of tearing him to pieces as soon as he should come abroad again. But he shut himself up to bewail her death until their fury was appeased by a magnificent funeral, at which he distributed four times as much burned wine as had ever been drank at any burial in England before." If such slight evidence of innocence satisfied the public, the conjectures about his guilt must have been exceedingly vague and indefinite.

During the remainder of this year he appears to have been a lunatic either real or feigned. Lord Lisle, in a letter to Sir William Temple, dated September 26th, 1667, says, "Poor Sir John Denham is fallen to the ladies also. He is at many of the meetings, at dinners talks more than ever he did, and is extremely pleased with those that seem willing to hear him, and from that obligation exceedingly praises the Duchess of Monmouth and my Lady Cavendish. If he had not the name of being mad, I believe in most companies he would be considered wittier than ever he was. He seems to have few extravagancies besides that of telling

stories of himself, which he is always inclined to. Some of his acquaintance say, that extreme vanity was the cause of his madness, as well as the effect of it."

Butler, the author of "Hudibras," probably jealous of the knight's court favour, wrote a lampoon upon his recovery from lunacy. "I know not," says Dr. Johnson, "whether the malignant lines were then made public, nor what provocation incited Butler to do what no provocation could excuse." The satire conveyed in these lines is ironically severe, and appears to hint at malversations in Sir John's official conduct—

" Besides you never overreached the king
One farthing all the while in reckoning,
Nor brought in false accounts with little tricks
Of passing broken rubbish for whole bricks—
False mustering of workmen by the day,
Deduction out of wages, or dead pay
For those that never lived; all which did come
By thrifty management to no small sum."

If Denham was for a period deprived of reason, the verses upon Cowley sufficiently prove that he recovered the full use of his intellectual powers before his death. This distinguished scholar he was not however long destined to survive, for on the 10th of March, 1668, he was buried by his side in Westminster Abbey, where their remains still lie.

Denham may be properly considered as one of those writers who assisted materially in teaching the art of correct versification. In composing the heroic verse, it was customary with many of his predecessors to carry the sense from line to line, more frequently making their periods halt in the middle of a couplet than at its conclusion. This defect he was one of the first to per-

ceive and remedy; for after the publication of "Cooper's Hill" but few instances will be found of this ungraceful and inharmonious method of versification. In point of perspicuity and clearness of expression, he excelled many contemporaries who were far superior to him in originality and imaginative power. He affected to use neither the wretched conceits of Donne, nor the unintelligible analogies of Cowley, but delivered his ideas in a language at once forcible and nervous, yet easy to be understood. His metre is remarkable for its regularity and ease, occasionally displaying an elevation of style, when the dignity of his subject demands it. The cadences of his versification are arranged with skill, being varied, melodious, and pleasing to the ear; almost every couplet indicating that he was gifted with that peculiar knowledge of harmony which is ever one of the first essentials in the art of poetry. His comparison of the style he desired to attain, with the river he described, points out exactly the correct principles he studied to establish, as well as the offensive errors he endeavoured to avoid.

"Oh could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My bright example as it is my theme;
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

"Cooper's Hill" is the most ambitious, and by far the best, of Denham's works. Independent of its intrinsic value as a poem, it may claim the honour of having formed one of the original models for that didactic species of descriptive poetry, which has since been so largely imitated. Instead of wasting their

powers upon some fantastic comparison, which leaves the reader puzzled to discover what analogy it bears to the subject before him, the writers of this school walked boldly forth into the field of nature, and having painted the scenes they beheld, proceeded to draw some useful moral from the materials presented to their view.

“Cooper’s Hill” appears to be the first specimen of a successful attempt to heighten the charms of some particular locality, by superadding to a description of the natural beauties of its scenery, such philosophical reflections as might be supposed to pass through the mind of the spectator from witnessing incidental events, or from taking a retrospective glance at the historical associations connected with the spot. Poems of this kind are naturally of a discursive character, the mind of the writer wandering from subject to subject like the bee from flower to flower, yet, when the scenes are skilfully changed without the thread of the narrative being too abruptly broken, this variety produces an effect far from displeasing.

The scene of “Cooper’s Hill” is laid in the neighbourhood of Windsor, where ascending an eminence, known by that designation, the poet passes in review the various features of interest that present themselves. The Castle, the distant tower of St. Paul’s, the Thames, the ruins of a neighbouring abbey, and an episode upon a stag hunt, furnish the materials from which the poem is constructed. Perhaps one of its noblest passages is that in which the river is personified and represented as the patron of commerce and the benefactor of the

human race. The comparison between the indifference of the herd to the dying stag, and that desertion of friends which a statesman too often discovers when passing from power to adversity, is elegant and pathetic.

“ The herd unkindly wise,
Or chases him from thence, or from him flies;
Like a declining statesman, left forlorn
To his friends’ pity or pursuers’ scorn.”

The poem is not, however, without its defects. The desire to moralise is too frequently indulged in, and many of the digressions diverge too widely from the subject. Occasionally, a vulgar image is obtruded. Nevertheless, considering the era in which it was written, and comparing it with the prosaic efforts of his contemporaries, the author has not, perhaps, been praised far above his deserts.

The art of translation stands much indebted to the genius of Denham, for having discarded the absurd practice his predecessors adopted of following their models line for line and word for word; he took a more comprehensive grasp of his subject and produced a nobler version than theirs, yet equally truthful to the sense and spirit of the original. The eulogium he passed on Fanshawe might be applied to himself—

“ A new and noble way thou dost pursue
To make translations and translators too;
They but preserve the ashes, thou the flame,
True to his sense, but truer to his fame.”

To sum up the claims of Denham we may say in the language of Dr. Johnson, that “ He is one of the writers that improved our taste and advanced our language, and whom we ought therefore to read with gratitude; though having done much he left much to do.”

THE

ENGLISH REVOLUTION

OF 1640.

THERE are, perhaps, few subjects which so many learned men have discussed, or upon which so many ponderous volumes have been written, as the History of the Great Rebellion. From the days of Lord Clarendon to the present time, it has been alike the favourite theme of the historian, the commentator, and the critic. The fountain head, from whence the political parties of modern England take their rise, the Revolution of 1640 is sometimes held up as an event to be applauded and admired, at others execrated as the devilish work of a rebellious and ungovernable faction. Some writers have approached the task of describing it from a desire to vindicate the conduct of those leaders in the struggle whose principles accorded with their own; others with a similar purpose have laboured equally to justify the chiefs of the opposite faction. Some have distorted facts and withheld evidence to clear royalty from the imputation of aggression; others, wilfully blind to the errors of the popular party, have represented its policy as faultless and above

censure. Some have sought to paint in vivid colours the triumph of the victors, others to enlist the voice of sympathy and pity in favour of the vanquished.

Although the tendency to assume the spirit of a partisan is a common fault with nearly all the writers who have described this memorable epoch, many apologies may be offered in their extenuation. For instance, impartiality could not be expected from those whose passions were excited as spectators of the conflict, whose interests and fortunes were at stake in its progress, and whose principles were either to be established or proscribed by its result. To suppose that such writers could hold the scales of justice with even hand would be unreasonable, since few men possess sufficient candour to admit opinions to be correct which do not harmonise with their own, particularly at a period when parties so widely differed, that to preserve neutrality was almost impossible. In more recent times, the bane of party spirit has perpetuated this defect, blinding the reason and warping the judgment of writers, who though professing to be candid and ingenuous, have insensibly imbibed such strong prejudices in favour of a particular policy, as to preclude them from arriving at just and impartial conclusions. Few have been enabled to withstand temptations so imperceptibly seducing, yet so dangerous to the cause of truth; hence, the language of our historians when referring to this subject, far more frequently displays the fervid warmth and enthusiasm of the advocate, than the unruffled calmness and imperturbable equanimity of the judge. He

who listens to the generous eloquence of Clarendon or Hume, will be apt to feel his sympathies enlisted in favour of the Episcopalian and the Cavalier; he who warms under the glowing panegyrics and brilliant declamation of Godwin or Macaulay, will be equally zealous for the Roundhead and the Puritan; but he who has pondered over the dispassionate arguments and the truthful reasonings of Hallam, will be convinced that there was much in the conduct of either party to censure and condemn, as well as much to commend and approve.

We shall offer no apology for making a few observations upon the immediate causes of the Revolution, because our object will be merely the humble one of bringing within an hour's reading some of the most prominent circumstances which led to that eventful struggle. We neither lay claim to originality, nor profess to have made any discoveries from study or research. Like the binder in the harvest field, we have only undertaken the subordinate task of gathering up the sheaves which the sickle of the reaper has previously cut down.

Paradoxical as it may appear, England was never in a more flourishing condition, as regards the material prosperity of her people, than at the period just antecedent to the Civil War. The long duration of peace she had enjoyed (if we except the brief war with Spain), the rapid extension of her commerce, the colonisation of her American settlements, the incorporation of those great companies that opened the trade of India and the Levant to her merchants, the

vast improvements in her agriculture, and the introduction of the silk, and various other manufactures, all combined to place her in a pre-eminently favourable position, when contrasted with other countries, such as Germany and France, where the devastating scourge of civil war, and the fanatic passions arising from religious feuds were exerting a marked influence in arresting the advance of civilisation, and impeding the progress of commercial enterprise. "In 1640," observes the great historian, "England had, for above twelve years, enjoyed the greatest calm and the fullest measure of felicity, that any people, or any age, for so long a time together have been blessed with; to the wonder and envy of all the other parts of Christendom." A Secretary, attached to the French Embassy, has left some curious memoirs relative to the state of England in 1641. He describes with astonishment the flourishing condition of her commerce, and the splendid appearance of her capital. In his voyage up the Thames, he counted no less than 850 ships—half merchant-men, and half ships of war; and in describing London, he observes, "This capital may not only boast of her excellent ports, her abundance of all kinds of merchandise, but of possessing the longest street, the most splendid taverns, and the greatest number of shops of any city in Europe." The Thames would appear to have presented as busy an aspect then, as it does at the present day, for he goes on to say, "Thousands of barges so cover the river with passengers, that the stranger seems to behold a continued bridge, or rather the representation of a sea-fight—

such are the admirable swiftness and dexterity of their manœuvres." Nor was the prosperity of the provinces inferior to that of the capital—great improvements having been effected to facilitate the inland communication, by means of new roads and canals, as well as by the establishment of letter posts between all the most important towns. The customs' receipts had in 1635 doubled their amount, since the reign of James. Woollen manufactures were exported even to India and the Levant; while the produce of the English mines was exchanged for the silks of Persia, and the spices of Hindostan. Luxury kept pace with the increasing wealth of the nation. The dwellings of the people had become sensibly improved both in appearance and convenience. Many of the finest specimens of the English Manor House date their erection from this period. The court almost excelled itself in the magnificence and splendour of its entertainments. Festivals of the most costly description were given by the principal nobility when honoured with the presence of royalty. Masques and pageants were performed with such ceremony and decoration, that upon one, to which the Inns of Court had invited the King and Queen, no less a sum than £21,000 were expended, although the spectacle lasted but for a few hours. So lavish and profuse were courtiers in their dress, that it is no exaggeration to say their estates were often carried on their backs. The Duke of Buckingham, when in the acmè of his power, appeared in a suit, the value of which was estimated at £80,000; and Bassompierre, the French Ambassador, remarks of this nobleman's

entertainments, that they were by far the most splendid he had ever witnessed. Yet, in spite of this general prosperity of the nation, the public mind was filled with suspicion, distrust, and discontent. There were grievances present in the political government of the State, which this very prosperity only served to render the more intolerable and the more oppressive.

It may reasonably be asked, what necessity for rebellion, or even opposition to a government under which the nation had risen to such a state of unexampled prosperity? Could there be great misrule or oppression where the trade, the commerce, and the riches of a people showed such uniform progression? Could any serious injustice be practised where all classes were steadily advancing in civilisation and improvement? To these questions we must reply, First, that although the community as a whole, were unquestionably in the enjoyment of general prosperity, yet, there frequently occurred so many instances of individuals being subjected to the most odious persecutions, in the shape of enormous fines, arbitrary imposts, and cruel punishments, that no one could say how long their property, their lives, or their liberty would be secure. Secondly, that the great mass of the people, though exempt from actually feeling the heavy weight of despotic power, sympathised freely with the unhappy victims, who were sacrificed without the possibility of obtaining redress, or of appealing to those tribunals in which it was their undoubted right to be heard. And, lastly, that the nation, observing the progressive manner in which Royalty, under the mask

of a prerogative, illegally exercised, was steadily encroaching upon the ancient institutions and established laws of the realm, perceived their only safety for the future, lay in compelling the Crown to surrender those unjust pretensions, which, if permitted to exist, would soon preclude the possibility of keeping either life or property secure. Under such a government as that of Charles, England might be prosperous for a period, but she could not long *remain* so. It was the bounden duty of a people to resist a ruler who had shown himself such a traitor to their interests, and such a tyrant to their persons. He had trampled upon their privileges; he had disregarded their laws; he had invaded their rights; he had destroyed their liberties. The more they retreated, the farther he advanced; the more they conceded, the larger the concession he demanded. They saw the hazardous position in which they were placed. They had learned by experience how he could break the most solemn promise, and violate the most sacred obligation. They knew that the very existence of freedom depended upon their conduct, and, with a spirit of noble generosity, they stood forward to vindicate the cause of individuals too humble to resist, and too obscure to oppose an adversary, who committed the most treasonable offences and perpetrated the most cruel outrages, under the shelter of a boundless prerogative, or the more blasphemous apology of the Divine Right of kings. To use the language of Lord Chatham, "There might be ambition, there might be sedition, there might be violence, but no one shall persuade us that it was not the cause

of liberty on the one side, and of tyranny on the other." From the conflict that ensued, the champions of freedom came forth triumphant: we rejoice in their success; we venerate those illustrious patriots who rescued the laws and the liberties of England from the evil genius of the House of Stuart; we glory in those immortal chiefs who with indomitable zeal and unshaken valour, stood ready to sacrifice their happiness, their fortunes, and their lives, for the preservation of the public weal; and never, we trust, may the day arrive, when Englishmen shall mention the names of a Hampden, a Cromwell, or a Pym, but with honour and respect.

One of the most striking advantages which the popular party possessed over their royalist opponents in the contest was the justness of their claims. Whatever might be the errors they committed after the struggle had commenced, whatever might be the crimes which tarnished their victory at its conclusion, no one can doubt but that at the onset they occupied the vantage ground of right, as the champions of a just and honourable cause. They aimed at no vast innovations, they proposed no speculative theories, they appealed to no revolutionary passions, but with a calm and determined energy they demanded from Royalty the recognition and observance of those great charters of liberty which their ancestors had established at such a costly sacrifice. They looked back through the vista of four hundred years, to that memorable Charter of Rights, the leading provisions of which still remained upon the statute book unrepealed. This was the pillar of fire that guided and

directed their troubled march. This was the beacon which amidst the darkness of the tempest and the fury of the storm continually served as an unerring light to direct their uncertain course. Had England remained enslaved and delivered over to the bondage of foreign rulers, had she become a tributary province of the Capets or the Valois, until the Tudors ascended the throne, it is hard to say what would have been the issue of the great contest in the seventeenth century. Happily such was not the case. Happily the popular party could from the Plantagenet reigns find written and established laws for almost every claim they revived, and for every privilege they demanded. They had only to sweep away the *illegal* encroachments which Royalty had effected under the disguise of false precedents, unlawful proclamations, or arbitrary imposts, and there remained laws in force amply sufficient for all the practical purposes of a free yet powerful government, as well as adequate to ensure a reasonable amount of liberty to the subject. To borrow the language of an able writer, "We know not whether there are any essential privileges of our countrymen, any fundamental securities against arbitrary power, so far as they depend upon positive institution, which may not be traced to the time when the House of Plantagenet filled the English Throne."

That the Royalist party were manifestly the aggressors in their dispute with the Parliament, cannot be questioned at the present day, except by those persons who regard an absolute monarchy as the most perfect form of political government, and who still believe in the

obsolete dogmas of passive obedience and the divine right of kings. It must, however, be admitted, that many of the arbitrary practices which the Tudor sovereigns in the plenitude of their power had grafted upon the royal prerogative afford some palliation for the conduct of Charles, although, certainly, not sufficient to exculpate him from the treasonable crime of attempting to subvert the established laws of the realm, by illegal innovations and a most unwarrantable neglect of the prescribed forms of the constitution. The truth is, he was born and bred in the principles of despotism. He imbibed the notions of high prerogative from his very cradle ; for no sooner had he arrived at years of discretion, than his father began to teach him those dangerous maxims on the art of kingcraft, which in after life were never forgotten. Some of these lessons, such as the following, give us a lively idea of the Stuart tenets, respecting the duty of subjects. "As it is atheism and blasphemy in a creature to dispute what the Deity may do, so it is presumption and sedition in a subject to dispute what a king may do in the height of his power. Good Christians will be content with God's will revealed in his word ; and good subjects will rest in the king's will revealed in his law." Such was the text from which the Solomon of Whitehall discoursed to his children and courtiers, for their future edification on the art of government ; and, certainly, the scholars proved in after years that the lessons they received in youth had not been allowed to pass away unheard. Charles differed from his father however in one im-

portant respect. He had less prudence. Hence, when he came to the exercise of power, he began to put in practice, those maxims of government about which James had only talked, for it is a remarkable characteristic of the latter, that he was always retreating the quicker when he was blustering and threatening the most. We are willing to admit, that Charles possessed many amiable qualities, that he was an affectionate husband, that he displayed many estimable virtues in domestic life, and that if his lot had been cast in a more private station, his erudition, his taste for the arts, and his general accomplishments, would have shone with lustre, and commanded universal admiration. He had, however, two particular defects in his character, which rendered him singularly unfit to fulfil the duties of so exalted a position as that of royalty, particularly at a period when men had ceased to regard kings as infallible agents, or as beings accountable for their actions to God alone. First, he betrayed such a haughtiness of demeanour towards even those who were well-disposed to his cause, that rather alienated than engaged their affections, and hindered them from feeling that devotion to his person of which he stood so much in need. He could not even bestow a favour with grace, but accompanied the gift with such a coldness of manner, that the receiver lost half the pleasure of accepting it. This failing followed him into public life, and, like a dark cloud, cast gloomy shadows wherever he appeared : thus, in his intercourse with the Parliaments, it was particularly observed and lamented : "The most that aggrieved the Parliament,

was the king's concessions for the good of his people came not off cheerfully ; he wanted a way indeed to give a gift, and make it thankworthy in the manner of bestowing it." Carte, who loses no opportunity of eulogising his virtues and apologising for his errors, is obliged to confess that " he was stiff and formal, and received people with such an air of coldness, that it looked like contempt. He was ungracious even in conferring favours upon those whom he loved and intended most to oblige. Few persons with all the vices of nature in their composition have ever created to themselves so many personal enemies as King Charles, with all the graces of a man, and all the graces of a Christian, raised to himself through the coldness of his reception of persons, and the harshness of his behaviour to them on particular occasions." Secondly, he was guilty of such insincerity in his conduct as a public man, that even his warmest friends began at length to receive his word with suspicion and distrust. Indeed, this duplicity eventually worked his ruin ; for it is impossible not to perceive but that there were many occasions, even after the strife and dissensions of civil war had been kindled, when if he had shown an honest determination to act up to his promises and declarations, such a majority of the nation would have been drawn over to his standard, that all farther opposition must have ceased. So constantly did Charles resort to this practice of 'dissimulation, that it became at length an habitual vice, which seriously prejudiced him in the estimation of those who were devotedly attached to his interests, and favourably in-

clined to support his pretensions. Even those advocates who have shown the greatest zeal in attempting to vindicate his cause, appear to be so convinced of his failings in this respect, that they seek rather to put forward some plausible apology than to attempt any direct disproof of the accusation. Thus, the defence they usually set up, is that the king's enemies having conducted themselves in a very unjustifiable manner, he was warranted in resorting to subterfuge and deceit, when attacked by such unscrupulous adversaries. "He was driven," say they, "to violate his word by the necessities of the moment; he was persecuted and pursued by remorseless foes, who took advantage of his misfortunes to extort unjust concessions. He only did evil that good might follow." Such pleas cannot, however, be allowed to carry much weight in absolving him from the charge of perfidy, when we consider that many instances of the darkest treachery may be proved against him before the dispute with the Commons had occurred; and that prior to the opening of the Long Parliament, the great leaders of the Opposition had scarcely committed a single act which could possibly be construed into aggression or injustice. In reality, Charles began to show examples of bad faith from a very early period of his life. When only heir apparent to the throne he was guilty of a most signal breach of confidence towards his tutor, Dr. Hakewill, who, in a moment of generous kindness, had shown him a letter, containing many arguments to dissuade him from consenting to the Spanish match—a subject then under the consideration of the Court. Although

Charles received the letter expressly as a private paper, and solemnly promised Hakewill "that it should go no farther than the cabinet of his own breast," yet in defiance of this pledge, the document was given to James for perusal, who upon reading the contents deprived Hakewill of all his preferments, and committed him to prison. The conduct of Charles towards the Spanish Court, in reference to his proposed marriage with the Infanta, was equally reprehensible. Thus, before quitting Madrid he swore to observe the terms of the marriage treaty, and left his proxy in the hands of the Earl of Bristol to deliver; but no sooner had he embarked at St. Andero, than he sent private instructions to the Earl to withhold it altogether. Many of the accusations he preferred against this nobleman at the instigation of that worthless favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, must have been to his knowledge scandalously false; yet he persisted in pressing for the impeachment. He gave a most solemn assent to the Petition of Right, yet when the Houses of Parliament required his answer to be printed he cancelled the real impression and caused a false one, invalidating all the leading provisions of the bill, to be issued—an expedient by which, says Hume, he endeavoured to persuade the people "that he had nowise receded from his former claims and pretensions." When so many instances of a breach of faith could be substantiated and proved against him, his word naturally came to be regarded as a bond of no value whatever, for what could be the worth of promises and concessions which were only granted to be withdrawn or cancelled the moment

a favourable occasion offered. Surely, the Commons were justified in requiring actual deeds, instead of mere promissory declarations, from a Prince with whom evasion and deceit appeared to be almost the daily business of life. To sum up the character of Charles in a few words, we may say that having originally imbibed most erroneous and exaggerated opinions respecting the nature of his royal prerogative, he continued from a love of arbitrary power to maintain these opinions, although convinced in his conscience of their falsity; that he secretly shaped his actions and designs so as to carry out these opinions, after having solemnly renounced them in public, and declared them as untenable and illegal; that he did not scruple to commit various acts of persecution and injustice, where he thought his authority strengthened and enlarged by such a policy; and, finally, that he was ready to sacrifice his warmest friend or most faithful adherent, if he imagined their fall would conduce either to fortify his position, or to confirm his power. If he had come forth a successful victor from the contest, he provoked with his people; if he had been cut off in the day of his might and the meridian of his power, History would have branded him as one of the worst of kings—but the martyrdom he suffered has thrown a veil over his errors; while the heroism, the magnanimity, and the fortitude he displayed amidst the adversities of the prison and the scaffold, have, in the eye of posterity, atoned for an ambition that was criminal in its aim, unscrupulous in its designs, and stained by treacheries of the deepest dye.

It has been remarked that Royalty had become unpopular in England when Charles ascended the throne. Never was there an assertion less founded upon truth. That institution still remained dear to the people. They clung to it through evil and through good report. They evinced a marked respect for its hereditary claims. They identified it with the national glory. They prided themselves upon its immemorial origin—its illustrious antiquity. They pointed with exultation to the rule of their greatest monarchs; to the days when their sceptre was wielded by the genius of an Alfred, the valour of an Edward, and the energy of an Elizabeth. Thirty years of misgovernment under the Stuarts had not been able to efface the generous devotion they were wont to show to the person of their sovereign. Not even the crimes of Charles could induce his subjects to be guilty of treating him with insult or disrespect. The truth is, the English people are essentially monarchical in their affections, and have always and at all times shown a remarkable predilection for royalty. Even when, at a later period, the Commonwealth was established, there was never more than a mere fraction of the nation that felt any real enthusiasm for such a polity, or wished to see it permanently substituted for their ancient monarchy. Cromwell was nearly made a King, and the Restoration might almost be called an unanimous act, so feeble was the opposition it excited. But although the great majority of the nation were thus ardently attached to the principle of hereditary royalty, they beheld with indignation the manner in which the Stuarts were destroying the fundamental

laws and institutions of the realm. They observed with displeasure the exercise of sovereign power entrusted to the guidance of obnoxious ministers, who made customs and precedents, that were quite foreign to the Constitution, and unmentioned in the Statute Book, superior to laws which had been scrupulously observed by their kings for four hundred years; and who, by scandalous and most treasonable innovations, showed too plainly that Royalty was becoming converted into a vulgar instrument for the exercise of tyranny and oppression, instead of serving as a bulwark for the maintenance and protection of public right. The people naturally resented these encroachments upon their privileges. They uttered firm but respectful protests against the conduct of the Crown and its advisers. They demanded that the prerogatives of royalty should for the future be strictly defined and legally administered; they desired to see a due and legitimate exercise of monarchy according to established law, and not a perversion of the kingly office according to individual caprice. Their language was calm, temperate, and dignified. Even when their representatives in Parliament were provoked to remonstrate harshly with the executive, they invariably directed their accusations not against the person of their sovereign but his evil advisers. It was against the arrogant Buckingham, the haughty Strafford, and the imperious Laud that their censures were pointed and their complaints preferred. They prayed to have those evil counsellors removed. A wise ruler would have listened to their advice and complied with their petition, but Charles, full of un-

bending pride and high pretension, persisted in the support of his obnoxious ministers, and thus identified himself with their rash designs. "I must let you know," said he, in addressing the Commons, "that I will not allow any of my servants to be questioned amongst you; much less such as are of eminent place and near unto me." By giving this impolitic support to an unpopular faction, in preference to relying upon the majority of the Commons, Charles placed the institution of royalty in direct antagonism to the wishes and interests of the nation. He desired to make men believe that the kingly office was independent of, and wholly above them. He attempted almost to provoke them into opposition and disaffection, by the harsh interpretations he put upon the relation in which they stood to the Crown. Instead of disguising any prerogative that might appear arbitrary and exacting, by a gracefulness of language, he took pains to exhibit it in the most prominent and offensive colours. Instead of seeking to identify his own cause with that of the people, he was constantly engaged in drawing invidious distinctions between them. Hence he was at first feared, and then hated and despised. How different was his conduct from that of Elizabeth! When his first Parliaments assembled, there were men present who remembered the graceful and flowing courtesy with which that great Queen had been accustomed to receive the suggestions of her faithful Commons; they recollected the zeal with which she endeavoured to animate their enthusiasm and enlist their sympathies in support of her cause; the readiness with which she conceded the

abolition of Monopolies—the patience with which she listened to their grievances—the graciousness with which she granted their requests. They recalled to memory the incomparable ability, the sagacious foresight, the lofty patriotism she displayed during the days of her glorious rule. They contrasted her frank and gracious bearing, her noble and majestic dignity, her firm yet respectful language, with the presumptuous contempt, the scornful tone, and the insulting defiance, which their present ruler thought proper to assume when addressing them. Had not the nation been sincerely and deeply attached to the institution of Royalty, Charles would never have been enabled to offer any serious resistance to the Parliament, much less to maintain a civil warfare of five years duration with occasional success. It was not the personal cause or the personal qualities of the King, which drew such numbers to his standard, but the fear men felt lest monarchy should perish in the contest he had provoked with the Parliament. If the principle of hereditary Royalty had not been held in great esteem by the English people, Charles would have had no party at all, for his firmest adherents, with one or two exceptions, were convinced that his opinions respecting the nature and administration of the Royal prerogative were founded upon error. Even of those gallant cavaliers who followed his fortunes from battle to battle with a chivalry and fidelity hardly ever equalled or surpassed, but few believed in the legality of Ship-Money, or the arbitrary practices of the Star-Chamber, and Court of High Commission. Falkland, Hyde, and

many of the leading Royalists had repeatedly inveighed against the levy of subsidies by the executive, unless the sanction of Parliament had been previously obtained ; yet when they saw Royalty in danger, they preferred to fall honourably in its defence, rather than live to witness its degradation or dishonour. Assuredly, Royalty must have struck deep roots into the hearts of men who could make such a sacrifice as to pass from the ranks of a triumphant into those of a defeated party, and perish there, without changing their principles, or acting so as to be accused of apostacy.

Of the various causes that led to the Civil War, there is scarcely one which exercised a more unfavourable influence in aggravating the dissension between the Crown and the people, than the hasty and intemperate manner in which Charles I. dissolved the early Parliaments of his reign. The great question at issue, namely, whether the Crown had or had not the right to levy taxation without the previous consent of the House of Commons, could only be decided peaceably within the walls of Parliament ; it must therefore have been a delusion little short of insanity to suppose that the nation would consider the mere abrupt and illegal discontinuance of those assemblies sufficient evidence to carry a verdict in favour of the Crown. Charles was, however, a ruler little adapted to direct the administration of any government, except that of a pure despotism, or to exercise any authority which required to be modified by the influence of public opinion, or to be restrained by the boundaries of established laws ; for his impetuous temper not only prevented him from

resorting to any of those conciliatory measures of compromise and concession that serve to moderate opposition, but hurried him into violent courses and fatal indiscretions, of which, in the more temperate hours of subsequent reflection, he generally repented. The suddenness of his dissolutions of Parliament, and the tone of haughty menace by which they were accompanied, served only to kindle a desire for revenge in the breasts of the people, and although none were at first so bold or so disloyal as to resist the authority of their sovereign by force of arms, yet these harsh assaults on the part of Royalty soon raised a spirit of powerful opposition in the nation, and urged men of independent minds to adopt more violent counsels. That the king never sincerely intended to act in happy concert with his Parliaments we firmly believe, for if he occasionally summoned these assemblies, it was either from the mere compulsion of his necessities, or with a view to seduce the principal leaders of the opposition to use in moments of excitement language that might be subsequently construed into sedition by servile and corrupt judges: thus affording a colourable pretext for that total abolition of the institution of Parliaments, which ever remained his most ambitious desire. Lord Clarendon, than whom no one can be better qualified to give an opinion upon such matters, refers with unusual emphasis to the mischief resulting from this want of harmony between the executive and the legislature. "No man," says he, "can show me a source from whence these waters of bitterness have more probably flowed, than from these unseasonable, unskilful, and

precipitate dissolutions of Parliament." But what hope indeed could there be of anything except despotism under a sovereign who described the legitimate, nay, the commendable efforts of the House of Commons to obtain redress of grievances before voting supplies, as an attempt "to tie him by new and indeed impossible bonds." It would surely have been wiser if Charles instead of using this language of exasperation, had acted upon the suggestions of that honest counsellor, who reminded him of the words Lord Burleigh addressed to Queen Elizabeth respecting her subjects: "Win their hearts, and you may have their purses and their hands." As Lord Keeper Williams observed: "No man that is wise will show himself angry with the people of England."

After the dissolution of his Third Parliament, in 1629, the King resolved to neglect the use of these assemblies and attempt to govern by prerogative alone. The refractory conduct of the Commons, their hesitation in granting him supplies, as well as the freedom of debate they exercised in criticising his measures, inspired him with the dangerous design of setting the institution of Parliament wholly aside, and having received the countenance and support of some able but unscrupulous counsellors, who hoped to profit by the enterprise, he lost no time in giving the experiment a trial. To render the levy of large subsidies no longer necessary, a peace was proposed to the courts of Spain and France, and these nations complying with the terms offered, Charles fondly imagined that no farther impediments remained to prevent him from establish-

ing an absolute government, in which Royalty would acquire such a complete centralisation of power, by the disuse of Parliaments, as would place it entirely above the influence of public opinion, as well as render it quite independent of popular control. This hazardous project appeared at first likely to be crowned with permanent success, nor can it be doubted but that the triumph of the cause of privilege would have been retarded for many generations, had the executive possessed a powerful standing army always at command, or had the court exercised a prudential economy in its proceedings. Several circumstances, fortunately however, concurred to obstruct royalty in its ascent towards despotism, and of these by far the most important was the increasing difficulty which the crown experienced in raising its revenues. The prodigal extravagance of the court, the lavish gifts bestowed upon favourites and their dependents, the repair of the navy to repulse the pirates of Barbary, and to prevent the Dutch from encroaching upon the English fisheries, combined with many other sources of expenditure, proved sufficient to require the levy of a much larger amount of taxation than either the king or his advisers had originally contemplated. To procure the necessary supplies for the immediate service of the Crown, extraordinary measures soon became needful, and Parliaments being no longer in existence to grant the required aids by legal means, the executive boldly reverted to many arbitrary practices of the Tudor sovereigns, declaring such acts precedents sufficiently valid to justify their renewal, although they were in

reality scandalous and illegal usurpations. The revenues arising from the unalienated crown lands, and the income derived from the customs of wardship and purveyance, now remained the only legal resources upon which the Crown could rely for supplies, and as these branches of the prerogative afforded a sum very inadequate to carry on the government efficiently, a variety of arbitrary extortions were enforced to replenish the exchequer. It must be admitted that neither Charles nor his ministers shrank from putting into practice their favourite maxim THOROUGH—a word sufficiently expressive of that despotic rule they intended to substitute for the ancient authority of Parliament. Their acts soon shewed into what evil hands power had been transferred. The Petition of Right, the solemn declarations, the large promises of the past, were each alike violated and disregarded. Soldiers were again billeted on the people. People were arrested without any cause being assigned. Patents of monopoly, that had been relinquished by Elizabeth and James, were revived. The forest laws were rigorously enforced. Lands adjacent to the royal domains were seized without adequate compensation being paid to the owners. Many of the ancient feudal oppressions were renewed. Composition for knighthood was made a pretext for despoiling the rich. Crimes were pardoned by the payment of bribes to the judges and the Crown. Even the members of the Royal Council received large sums of money to allow the various irregular proceedings that occurred to pass under their eyes unnoticed. Charles himself had not scrupled to

receive £6000, to exempt Strafford from the consequences of his illegal conviction of Lord Mountmorris. Exorbitant fines were imposed by commissioners upon those persons who infringed proclamations, or committed the slightest offence against Royalty. Benevolences and forced loans, though abolished by Parliament, were again put in practice. The least freedom of speech in criticising the conduct of the Court or the Ministers was declared libellous, and visited by the most cruel punishments. Penalties for recusancy and nonconformity were increased. If the victim were rich he was fined almost to his ruin; if poor he was mutilated, tortured, degraded, and imprisoned. Nothing can well exceed the severity with which the unhappy persons convicted of libel or misdemeanour in the Star-Chamber were treated. They were fined, whipped, and placed in the pillory. Their ears were cut off, and the stumps exposed to the burning sun. Their noses were slit open. Their cheeks were branded with the letters *S. L.*, (seditious libeller) and after being subjected to such tortures and indignities, solitary confinement for an indefinite period became their doom. No place was secure from the searching glance of inquisitors appointed by the Crown to detect political offences, and bring delinquents into those terrible tribunals of arbitrary power—the Star-Chamber and Court of High Commission. Private houses were searched and libraries ransacked upon the slightest, and oftentimes most groundless suspicion. Documents and letters containing the least disrespectful allusion to the King or his Ministers were received

as evidence of seditious intentions, and subjected the writers of such papers to heavy fines, imprisonment, and mutilation. Upon such frivolous charges Sir Robert Cotton was deprived of his valuable writings, which were with difficulty obtained by his family after his death, an event hastened by this unworthy treatment. A plea of this kind was sufficient to warrant the seizure of Sir Edward Coke's private papers, many of which were destroyed or never restored. Bishop Williams, for merely applying an irreverent epithet to the Primate, in a letter intended only for private correspondence, was fined £8000 and detained three years in prison. Such a mockery of judicial investigation was never witnessed, as the trials that took place in the Star-Chamber and Court of High Commission. The judges holding office only *quam diu se bene gesserant*, were but tools subservient to those who moved the mainsprings of political power. The bar, kept in awe and full of submission, had not the courage to plead the cause of the accused. Even those who expressed sympathy for the sufferings of the wretched men that fell under the vengeance of the Court, were not permitted to pass unpunished. To visit or hold any communication with the culprits, was considered criminal. Nothing can well exceed the severity with which the principal offenders were treated. They were dispatched to solitary prisons, in obscure places, lest the wrongs and persecutions they suffered should excite the compassion of the multitude, and thus hazard a rebellion for their deliverance. They were not permitted to see their families, or hold

any correspondence with their friends. In a word, they were consigned to a bondage of darkness, from whence the ray of hope was excluded, and in comparison with which death almost appeared a lighter and more welcome doom. Never had the nation been called upon to witness such flagrant violations of public right, such treasonable perversions of law, such infamous prostitutions of justice, as were practised by the myrmidons of power during the interval in which the King dispensed with the use of Parliaments, and prohibited the very mention of these assemblies. Yet against such grievous wrongs and oppressions no violent opposition was offered by the people, no armed resistance attempted. Society appeared to watch the progress of events tranquil and unmoved; but it was the dangerous stillness that foretels the hurricane—the sultry calm that precedes the storm. Scarcely a symptom marked the rapid progress of that deadly distemper, which, lurking inwardly, was all the more dangerous for being unheeded and unseen.

Had Charles I. and his advisers proceeded with more caution and circumspection in attempting to establish a permanent despotism, their efforts might have been attended with greater chances of success. They were, however, far too impetuous and rash to accomplish an enterprise, the attainment of which required rather the qualities of artifice and cunning, than those of boldness and temerity. Their counsels were impatient and intemperate; their plans of action imprudent and ill-advised. They advanced when they should have retreated. They retreated when the wiser

course would have been to advance. Instead of gaining a position silently and by favour of night, they marched forward by open day in the very face of the enemy. They knew not the value of the Fabian policy, they could never understand that it might be sometimes expedient to temporise and delay. This blind precipitation eventually worked their ruin.

Ill satisfied with the tardy manner in which supplies were furnished from the various sources of taxation they had illegally re-established, such as benevolences and forced loans, Charles and his despotic council determined to devise a new scheme of impost, which should prove not only more productive but more permanent than any of the methods hitherto adopted; in short, they desired to invent some tax of very general application "for a spring and magazine that should have no bottom, and for an everlasting supply on all occasions." When, under the Tudor sovereigns, the nation was exposed to extreme danger from foreign invasion, the Crown had occasionally been permitted to dispense with the ordinary legal forms of raising subsidies by authority of Parliament, and resort to certain strong acts of prerogative, which could not be exerted in seasons of tranquillity and peace. Thus, when the state was supposed to be endangered by the hostile preparations of foreign powers, such as the Spanish Armada for instance, the Crown was tacitly allowed to stretch its prerogative so far, as to require by proclamation a certain number of armed vessels from the city of London, and each of the maritime ports of the southern coast. As, however, it was not

always convenient or possible to levy the money for the equipment of these fleets with exactness and impartiality, a custom at length prevailed of discontinuing to require each port to furnish its own vessels and munitions, by demanding an equivalent in money from the inhabitants of the counties severally liable to the tax, each county being assessed at a rate proportionate to its size, produce, and population. The amount of the tax thus levied, was paid into the exchequer under the term of Ship-Money—a word “of lasting sound in the memory of this kingdom.” Strafford suggested to his sovereign that if a fleet might be raised in this manner, it was equally justifiable to raise an army by the same means, and since a large military force was the great desideratum required for the accomplishment of their designs, they determined to pervert the application of the tax, and set all precedents and examples at defiance. Noy and Finch, two of the principal law officers of the Crown, entered fully into the views entertained by their master and his rash adviser. They searched the ancient records of the Tower, and, after a diligent investigation, discovered precedents which appeared sufficient, unless minutely examined, to warrant the executive in levying Ship-Money, not only from the maritime but the inland counties as well. Upon this authority writs were issued by the Crown to the Sheriff of every county in England, with instructions, “that instead of a ship, he should levy upon his county such a sum of money, and return the same to the treasurer of the navy for his majesty’s use.” This decision of the

Crown lawyers was published in 1632, and for four years subsequently the impost continued to be paid with tolerable regularity, though not without exciting considerable opposition upon several occasions. In proportion as the necessities of the King became more urgent, the tax was augmented in amount and extended in its application; but the resistance to these obnoxious encroachments at length became so general and the collection of the fines so difficult, that scarcely half the sum at which the different counties were assessed found its way into the royal treasury. In this dilemma, the ministers thought it advisable to demand a special extra-judicial opinion from the twelve judges, to confirm the practice of levying Ship-Money, imagining that a decision so imposing and authoritative as that of the highest interpreters of the law, would, when thus pronounced, set the question entirely at rest. The judges, partly from a servile spirit of mean subservience to their employers, partly from conviction, and partly from a desire to give an unanimous opinion, came to the conclusion "that when the good of the kingdom in general was concerned, and *the whole kingdom in danger*, his majesty might under the great seal require his subjects to provide such ships, so armed and provisioned, and for such time as he should see good, and might compel the doing of it in case of refractoriness, and that of the dangers and mode of prevention his majesty was the sole judge." In the face of this ex-cathedrâ decision, so authoritatively and solemnly proclaimed, the opposition to the tax became more violent than ever. Men now saw clearly

that the judges were mere tools in the hands of the King and his despotic cabal, ready to be prostituted for any illegal purpose or base design, and that unless an intrepid resistance to this obnoxious impost was commenced at once, no bounds of privilege could remain which the prerogative of Royalty in its presumptuous arrogance would not break down and invade. The principal leaders of the opposition, who had acted together in former Parliaments, consulted the most eminent constitutional lawyers that were independent of the Court, and being convinced from the arguments then adduced that the tax was perfectly illegal and arbitrary in its character, they determined to bring the question to an issue at once, by peremptorily refusing to pay the next demand which should be made. Hampden, whose estate lay in Buckinghamshire, was the first to offer resistance. He was rated only at twenty shillings—a sum so insignificant in comparison with his princely domain, that many supposed the sheriff had shown especial favour to prevent him from opposing the measure. Small, however, as might be the tribute demanded, Hampden and his colleagues were well aware that some one of influence in the country must effectually expose the illegality of the tax, and prevent its future imposition, unless they intended to admit as a general principle that the Crown possessed the right to enforce arbitrary taxation, as well as to abolish the privileges of Parliaments for ever. He therefore refused payment of the required sum, and demanded to be heard in defence at the Court of Exchequer. The Crown being fully aware of the

importance of the cause, and the weight that would be attached to its decision, ordered the twelve judges to assemble in the Exchequer Chamber, and finally decide this great controversy between the executive and the people, postponing at the same time the day of trial for six months, in order that the necessary evidence might be fully prepared, and the opinions of the bench previously ascertained if possible.

The period fixed for this important cause to be heard at length arrived. St. John and Holborn appeared as counsel for Hampden, Banks and Littleton, the Attorney, and Solicitor General for the Crown. On the part of Hampden it was alleged that the nation had not been placed in such imminent danger from fear of foreign invasion, as to warrant the Crown in resorting to Ship-Money, that many laws remained upon the Statute Book unrepealed, particularly the Confirmation of the Charters in the reign of Edward I., which expressly prohibited the levy of taxation without consent of Parliament, and especially authorised Parliaments to be called once a year, or oftener if need be, for that purpose: finally, that the King himself had assented to the Petition of Right—a law that swept away all the precedents to which Noy had formerly referred, by establishing the paramount fact, “that no man can thereafter be compelled to make or yield any gift, loan, benevolence, tax, or such like charge, without common consent by Act of Parliament.” On the part of the Crown, evidence was at first adduced to show that the ancient Danegelt of the Anglo-Saxons resembled Ship-Money, from having

been assessed and collected in a similar manner. Several other precedents, proving that inland towns had been occasionally required to pay the tax, were also produced; but these instances were evidently either commissions of array, or referred to very early times. Finding such arguments of no avail after the masterly statements of Hampden's counsel, the Attorney General resorted to another point of defence, and insisted that the King had a right to levy Ship-Money, or any other tax, upon his own absolute and intrinsic authority. "This power," observed Banks, "is innate in the person of an absolute king, and in the person of the kings of England. This power is not in any way derived from the people, but reserved unto the king when positive laws first began. For the king of England, he is an absolute monarch; nothing can be given to an absolute monarch but what is inherent in his person. He can do no wrong. He is the sole judge, and we ought not to question him. Where the law trusts, we ought not to distrust. Acts of Parliament contain no words to take away so high a prerogative, and the King's prerogative, even in lesser matters, is always saved wherever express words do not restrain it."

The opinions of several of the judges were, if possible, more favourable to the cause of prerogative than those of the counsel who pleaded on behalf of the Crown, for their ideas of kingly power, if admitted to be correct, would have destroyed the humblest privileges of the subject, and placed the liberties of the people entirely at the mercy of an arbitrary and uncontrollable despotism. "This imposition without

Parliament," said Justice Crawley, "appertains to the King originally, and to the successor ipso facto, if he be a sovereign, in right of his sovereignty from the Crown. You cannot have a king without these royal rights; no! not by Act of Parliament." Judge Berkley observed, "The law knows no such king-yoking policy. The law is itself an old and trusty servant of the king's; it is his instrument or means which he useth to govern his people by: I never read or heard that *lex was rex*, but it is common and most true that *rex is lex*." Chief Justice Finch laid it down as a fundamental principle, that "No Act of Parliament could bar a king of his regality, as that no land should hold of him, or bar him of the allegiance of his subjects, or the relation on his part as trust and power to defend his people; therefore, Acts of Parliament to take away his royal power in the defence of his kingdom are void; they are void Acts of Parliament to bind the king not to command the subjects, their persons, and goods, and I say their money too; for no Acts of Parliament make any difference." After a protracted deliberation of many days, seven of the twelve judges pronounced in favour of the Crown, the remaining five voting against the writ. So transparently fallacious, however, were the arguments of the majority who decided for the Crown, that from the day on which the trial concluded, Ship-Money became more generally and more successfully resisted than ever. "This judgment," remarks the great historian of those times, "proved of more advantage to the gentleman condemned, than to the King's service." If, indeed, the people had tamely

acquiesced in the decision given by these prejudiced and corrupt administrators of the law all property must henceforward have been considered, as held entirely at the sufferance and pleasure of the sovereign, for, as Lord Clarendon observes, "when men saw in a court of law (that law that gave them title to and possession of all they had) reasons of state urged as elements of law; judges as sharp-sighted as secretaries of state and in the mysteries of state; judgment of law grounded upon matter of fact, of which there was neither enquiry nor proof; and no reason given for the payment of the thirty shillings in question, but what included the estates of all the standers by; they had no reason to hope that doctrine, or the promoters of it, would be contained within any bounds." That the prerogative of Royalty under the Tudors had been exalted very high, as well as permitted to commit many illegal acts, cannot be denied; yet it is an observation worthy of remark, that those sovereigns, even in the very height and fulness of their power, for the most part, paid a marked deference to decisions pronounced either in the Courts of Justice or of Parliament, and that they called upon the Judges as seldom as possible to countenance those irregular practices which their temper, their necessities, or their desires, occasionally urged them to adopt. The Stuarts, less prudent, thought proper to disregard the forms and appearances, by which their predecessors had veiled the harshness of arbitrary power, and hidden its worst deformities from the public eye. Neither James nor Charles stretched the prerogative of the Crown nearly

so wide as did Henry VIII., or Elizabeth, yet the manner in which they strained its pretensions was far more offensive and intolerable to be borne; for parties, condemned in their Courts of Justice, were compelled to endure, not only the weight of the judgment itself, but the passion of the judges as well. After Hampden's trial, nothing could be more clear than that the judges were complete instruments of despotism in the hands of the king and his advisers, enjoying neither freedom of opinion, nor independence of thought. Thus, we find Hutton, after voting in favour of Hampden, humbly apologising to Strafford for his conduct, and commending the arguments of the Chief Justice. Finch himself, upon being charged with inconsistency by a friend, confessed his dependence upon royalty. "I was soundly chidden by his Majesty," says he, "for my former vote: I will not destroy myself for any man's sake." The nation were not slow to discover, that the arguments and decisions of the venal hirelings that composed this prostituted magistracy could carry but little weight, either in point of morality or justice; and as the law depended for its efficiency and utility entirely upon the integrity of those who inculcated its precepts, and explained its subtleties, all respect as well as reverence for that began to vanish also. It was no longer individuals who resisted the payment of Ship-Money, but whole classes of the community, and since it was impossible to punish or imprison multitudes, the tax became far less productive, after the practice had received a *quasi* legality in the Courts of Justice, than when it merely

rested upon the less substantial foundations of precedent or example. Many persons who had willingly paid the imposition when it was merely claimed as a favour, refused to contribute when it came to be demanded as a right. Thus, Queen Elizabeth having requested the Lord Mayor and the Common Council of London to supply her with fifteen ships and five thousand men, to assist in repulsing the Armada, the citizens "humbly entreated the Council, in sign of their loyalty and perfect love to their prince and country, to accept thirty ships and ten thousand men amply furnished;" but when Charles I., armed with all the weapons of forensic authority, and supported by all the weight of prelatical influence, attempted to press the tax of Ship-Money, he could scarcely collect one-third of the sum required by the assessment. Lord Clarendon observes, "it is notoriously known, that the pressure of Ship-Money was borne with much more cheerfulness before the judgment for the king, than ever it was after; men before pleasing themselves with doing somewhat for the king's service, as a testimony of their affection, which they were not bound to do; many really believing the necessity, and therefore thinking the burden reasonable; others observing that the advantage to the king was of importance, when the damage to them was not considerable; and all assuring themselves, that when they should be weary or unwilling to continue the payment, they might resort to the law for relief and find it. But when they heard this demanded in a court of law as a right, and found it by sworn judges of the law adjudged so upon such grounds and

reasons as every stander by was able to swear was not law, and so had lost the pleasure and delight of being kind and dutiful to the king; and, instead of giving, were required to pay, and by a logic that left no man anything which he might call his own; they no more looked upon it as the case of one man, but the case of the kingdom—not as an imposition laid upon them by the King, but the judges which they thought themselves bound in conscience to the public justice not to submit to.”

Deficient, however, and uncertain as might be the revenues of the Crown, now that the main sources of supply were rendered ineffective, the King could have still contrived to neglect the assemblage of Parliament, if he had commanded a wise economy to be observed in the proceedings of the Court, and kept the nation in a state of peace. But this politic course was not long practised, for a dispute with the Scottish people respecting the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs, having at length terminated in civil war, Charles and his Ministers were reduced to such narrow straits of necessity, that a recurrence to Parliament for support became inevitable. We shall glance briefly at the origin of this contest. It had long been the favourite design of Archbishop Laud, to alter the services and remodel the discipline of the Scottish Church, in such a manner that some approach to an uniformity with that of England might be established; and as the King was ardently attached to the Articles, the Ritual, and the Episcopal Constitution of the Anglican Church, his ready co-operation for promoting the introduction

of the Primate's measures was easily obtained. Many of the changes they proposed were not only exceedingly prejudicial and ill-advised, but appeared to approach so nearly to the complexion of the rites and ceremonies performed by the Roman Catholic Clergy, that it was an easy task for those dissentients who disapproved of such innovations to proclaim them as attempts to resuscitate the general practice of that religion; and since the Scotch, from their strong inclination to Calvinistic doctrines, had always regarded the principles of the Reformed Church of England as hardly a degree removed from those of Rome, a most virulent and uncompromising opposition to Laud's innovations speedily ensued. Few men could have been more ill-adapted than this Prelate to direct the Church in such perilous times; for, however upright might be his intentions, and however sincere his piety, he wanted that dignified moderation and dispassionate judgment, which were so essential to render him equal to the exalted mission he was called to perform. The unbounded reverence he required to be paid to the sacerdotal office, his haughty bearing to inferiors, his zeal for innovations, his love for the pomps of worship, his fondness for vain and gaudy ceremonies, and his avowed belief in ridiculous dreams and superstitious omens, all concurred to lower his character in the estimation of men, and to prevent them from showing that respect and obedience which ought to have been willingly accorded to him, when fulfilling so sacred a function as that of presiding over the Church. Lord Bolinbroke has remarked, that Laud did not possess

sufficient temper or knowledge of the world to govern the affairs of a private college, an observation certainly well verified by his conduct during the whole period of his unhappy rule; for the growth of Puritanism was undoubtedly much hastened by the cruel and vindictive punishments he inflicted upon the leaders of that sect, as well as by the public odium he endeavoured to affix upon all who dissented from the standard of religious orthodoxy he attempted to establish. A man of more tolerant views, and endowed with a larger spirit of forbearance, might have healed the various animosities that distracted the peace and endangered the safety of the Church, but the imperious temper, the inflexible determination, and the fiery zeal of Laud, were qualities far more calculated to inflame the virulent passions of sectarian rancour, than to assuage or moderate that fanatical enthusiasm which was the plague spot of the age. Like his sovereign, he knew not how to conciliate an adversary by timely concession, or to win over an opponent by temperate argument; but imagined himself omnipotent, as the elect of apostolic succession, to prescribe laws for the government of the Church, and to punish those who disobeyed his injunctions. Having conceived a particular system of religious belief, as necessary to salvation, he required all persons to accept the tenets and practise the precepts he taught. To dispute the validity of his doctrines, or to question the orthodoxy of his principles, were unpardonable crimes; accordingly, for those who were guilty of heresy or nonconformity he thought no persecutions could be too unrelenting and

no punishments too severe. Believing in Archbishop Bancroft's unwise pretension, that Episcopacy was a divine and not a human institution, and that Bishops held their rights from God alone, he only awaited a favourable opportunity to place the temporal supremacy of the Church even above that of the Crown, and to assume an authority, as pretentious, as dogmatical, and as infallible as that of the Popes themselves. So nearly had he completed this task, that we find him rejoicing over the fulfilment of his wishes. "Now let the Church subsist and sustain her own power herself; all is accomplished for her; I can do no more." Whatever might be the faults which Laud committed, he cannot be accused of resorting to hypocrisy, or practising deceit. He used neither artifice nor subterfuge in the prosecution of his plans, but proceeded with an openness and frankness that were often fatal to the ends he had in view. His whole mind was directed to farther the advancement of his Order, and to fortify the authority of Royalty, except where that institution threatened to encroach upon the Church. In promoting these designs he committed many errors, but the weakness of his judgment, and the integrity of his conscience, afford some palliation for his impolitic conduct, and great as might be the evil he brought down upon the Church, her Councils have often been directed by men, who though apparently more praiseworthy in the eye of the world, were far less pure in heart and upright in principle. It was truly observed of Laud, by one who knew him well, "that he did not sufficiently consider what men said or were likely to say of him."

Many circumstances had occurred in the English Court, which, through the plausible misinterpretations put upon them by the Schismatics, led the Scotch people to infer that both the King and the Primate were zealously employed in preparing to submit the nation once more to the spiritual yoke of Rome; and since nothing appeared so hateful or so wicked in the sight of the Puritans as the Papal Power, these rumours obtained a far greater degree of credit than they deserved. The offer of a Cardinal's Hat to Laud, his predilection for the Arminian tenets, his assumption of the title of Holiness, his favourable reception of the envoy Panzani from the Court of Rome, his acceptance of a loan from the Catholics, procured through the agency of the Queen, and, lastly, the tolerant manner in which he treated the Popish recusants, formed sufficient evidence for malicious adversaries to declare that he was negotiating an arrangement between the King and the Pope, to effect the Restoration of Catholicism in Scotland. Both Charles and the Primate may, however, be creditably absolved from this grave accusation, since no trustworthy or convincing proofs can be adduced to show that they ever seriously contemplated the design of placing the Church of England in subjection to the Papal Court, or that they were on the verge of becoming converts to the Romish faith. Overtures were certainly made by the emissaries of St. Peter's to win over Laud to the support of the Papal cause, but his answer was, that "something dwelt within him which would not suffer that, till Rome were other than it is." If the

sincerity of this language be discredited from the circumstances under which it was spoken, the final declaration Laud made upon the scaffold must at least be allowed to carry some weight in proving, that he had neither wavered in his attachment to the principles of the Church of England, nor contemplated any serious design for the subversion of the Protestant religion. Upon that solemn occasion, his impressive words are recorded to have mitigated even the rancour of his enemies, and to have called forth feelings of compunction and remorse from his bitterest persecutors. "I was born and baptized" said he, "in the bosom of the Church of England, established by law; in that profession I have ever since lived, and in that I come now to die. This is no time to dissemble with God, least of all in matters of religion; and therefore I desire it may be remembered, I have always lived in the Protestant religion, established in England, and in that I come now to die. I can bring no witness of my heart and the intentions thereof; therefore I must come to my protestation, not at the bar, but my protestation at the hour and instant of my death, in which I hope all men will be such charitable Christians as not to think I would die and dissemble, being instantly to give God an account of the truth of it." As to the King himself, he ever remained a firm and faithful adherent to the Church of England, "believing it to be instituted the nearest to the practice of the Apostles and the best for the propagation and advancement of the Christian religion of any church in the world." That both Charles and Laud were inclined to allow

the Catholics a toleration far more latitudinarian than was either politic or judicious, it would be idle to deny ; yet their conduct in this respect admits of some extenuation, when the provocation they received from the Puritan is fully explained. As to the submission and humility observed by the Romanists, such qualities can form no apology for the lenient treatment they experienced ; because nothing is more certain than that intolerance and persecution would have been again resorted to by the followers of that religion, the moment they should regain a predominant ascendancy to the State. The Papist might plead the cause of toleration when suffering the bondage and restraints of adversity, but he would not the less scruple to resume an intolerant course when replaced in power, for persecution even to death if necessary, was enjoined by the highest authority of the Papal Church as one of the most meritorious duties of a sincere Catholic. Laud in particular, is, however, open to just reproach, for imitating several practices of the Romish Church, which were quite at variance with the cardinal principles of the Reformation. Thus, in bestowing ecclesiastical preferments, he publicly declared, that he would select unmarried in preference to married clergymen, supposing their merits to be equal. Now the celibacy of priests had always been regarded by the purest Reformers as one of the most objectionable errors of the Roman Catholic Church, and they had invariably sought both by precept and example, to inculcate the more commendable course of favouring the marriage of the clergy, esteeming that condition

no impediment, but rather an incentive and an inducement to a virtuous life. Melancthon and Calvin both entered the bonds of wedlock. Cranmer married a niece of Osiander; while Luther, in defiance of the Papal anathemas hurled against him, sought a matrimonial alliance with a nun. An extreme partiality for display and pomp in conducting the services of the Church was another of Laud's faults. Thus, in approaching the Communion Table to administer the Sacrament, we are told, he would bow and start back seven times before touching the bread and wine, as though he were too unworthy to perform so sacred a rite. If one may credit the report of his proceedings, his conduct was more adapted to a theatre than a church; thus, we learn, that "after the reading of many prayers, he approached the sacramental elements and gently lifted up the corner of the napkin in which the bread was placed. When he beheld the bread, he suddenly let fall the napkin, flew back a step or two, bowed three several times towards the bread; then he drew nigh again, opened the napkin, and bowed as before. Next, he laid his hand on the cup, which had a cover upon it, and was filled with wine. He let go the cup, fell back, and bowed thrice towards it. He approached again, and, lifting up the cover, peeped into the cup. Seeing the wine, he let fall the cover, started back, and bowed as before. Then he received the sacrament, and gave it to others." Again, in consecrating St. Catherine's Church, he contrived that at the moment he entered the building, a person concealed should exclaim with a loud voice: "Open,

open ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in !” A superstitious observation of fasts and holidays, the introduction of new vestments, and a variety of useless ceremonies in the celebration of public worship, the restoration of the crucifix, and a revival of the custom of hanging pictures in the churches, were measures which excited great animadversion, and tended to displease even those persons who were firmly attached to the principles of the Anglican Reformation. These, and many other forms harmless and innocent enough in themselves, but ill suited to the austere temper of the age, gave unpardonable offence to the Puritans, who regarded everything that approached the nature of ceremony as the arts of Antichrist, and who looked upon all ornaments and decorations, however simple and appropriate they might be, as relics of Popery and a revival of idolatry. The Queen having unfortunately been educated in the Roman Catholic persuasion, formed another difficulty which became a pregnant source of mischief and disaffection, for any trifling courtesy shown by the King to facilitate her in the observance of that religion, was construed by the Sectaries into an inclination on his part to re-establish the general practice of Romanism in his dominions. Yet no accusation could be more nefariously untrue. Charles frequently lamented the imprudent carriage and offensive behaviour of the Puritans, as circumstances tending to confirm the Queen in her attachment to the Romish Church. “I fear,” said he, “such notions (so little to the advancing of the Protestant profession !) may occasion a farther

alienation of mind and divorce of affections in her from that religion which is the only thing wherein we differ." And this difference he repeatedly mentions as his "greatest temporal difficulty." Surely, such evidence must go far to prove that Charles was innocent of attempting any insidious intrigues to undermine the national religion, and that he desired rather to convert the Queen than to be converted by her. But so hostile and acrimonious were the feelings entertained by the rival factions of Papist and Puritan, that to keep a middle course between them was a task almost impracticable to accomplish.

Before Charles I. and the Primate are too harshly censured for interfering with the affairs of the Scottish Church, it must be borne in mind that they received great provocation from the Puritanical portion of that nation, a sect, who in their unbridled zeal and fiery fanaticism, assailed not only the Papists but the Bishops of the Anglican Church as well. To have treated the libels and reproaches of these contumacious churchmen with silence and contempt would have been the wiser policy, but neither Charles nor Laud possessed sufficient command of temper or calmness of judgment to observe so dignified a course.

Let us enquire into the origin of the Puritans. The Scottish Reformation differed essentially in many respects from that of England. In the one instance the nobles, the inferior clergy, and the people, effected the overthrow of Popery in defiance of Royalty. In the other the Reformed religion was peaceably introduced under the authority of the civil rulers of the state. In

Scotland the Reformation was established by the nation—in England by the Court. The English people never offered any stern or resolute resistance to the particular form of religion prescribed by the sovereign. Some few murmurs might be heard when a change of faith was at first enforced, but they soon died away. Individuals might deny the royal supremacy and obstinately refuse to conform, but they were burned or tortured. A county or two might rise in rebellion, but the rioters were put down and their abettors hanged. It would have been madness under the Tudor rule to dream of deposing the rightful heir to the crown—so firm, so consolidated, so indisputable was the position of Royalty, when resting upon the secure basis of a legitimate title. The might of the feudal barons had irrecoverably passed away. The church had lost its power of intimidation and control. Even Parliaments were crouching, servile, and submissive. All things conspired to elevate and exalt Royalty, and for this end no sacrifice was imagined too great, and no surrender of privilege too dear. The reason of this subservience to kingly power is to be sought in the fact, that the principle of hereditary royalty became deeply grafted upon the minds of the English people after the troubled vicissitudes they had witnessed in the struggle between the Yorkist and Lancastrian factions. So readily were they disposed to support the claims of the legitimate heir to the Crown, that they assented to conform to a religion in which they did not believe, rather than risk the renewal of a Succession War like that of the Roses. Thus, under Mary, although the

great majority of the nation were unquestionably Protestants at heart, they suffered Lady Jane Grey to be beheaded, and allowed Wyatt's insurrection to fail for want of popular support. This is the secret of the absolutism which the Tudors enjoyed—this is the circumstance which enabled the sovereigns of that House to arrogate to themselves the right of fashioning the national religion according to their own dogmatic notions of orthodoxy. Under Henry VIII. the nation willingly withdrew their spiritual allegiance from Rome, and acknowledged the supremacy of the Crown in matters of faith. Henry aspired to be the Pope of England. He made and unmade Bishops at his royal pleasure. He assumed not only a temporal but a spiritual jurisdiction over the Church. He beheaded Catholics for treason, and burned Protestants for heresy. Under Edward VI. the people were Protestant. Under Mary they were Catholic. Under Elizabeth they were Protestant again. The religion of the nation changed entirely according to the will of the reigning monarch—neither the Parliaments or the people daring to remonstrate with Royalty, or to offer any firm resistance to its decrees. Thus, the establishment of the Reformation in England was at the outset merely a work of worldliness, accidentally resulting from the pursuit of a selfish and calculating policy. Its first foundations lay entirely upon the narrow basis of expediency and convenience. It was not brought about by men who indignantly repudiated the errors, the follies, and the superstitions of the old religion, or who felt a burning and irrepressible zeal for the purity

and the truthfulness of the new, but it came forth from the hands of servile churchmen and corrupt ministers, who sought to achieve their own elevation and advancement by gratifying the ungovernable lusts, the insatiable cupidity, and the unprincipled ambition of one of the most cruel, rapacious, and sanguinary tyrants the world ever saw. It was not from Henry VIII., from Cromwell, or from Cranmer that the light of the English Reformation derived its brilliancy and its lustre, but from the Hoopers, the Ridleys, the Latimers, and that countless host of illustrious martyrs who perished in defending the doctrines and propagating the precepts of Apostolic Truth. These are the men to whom the glory of the victory belongs. These are the men to whom the cause of Christianity is eternally indebted. Men who held firmly to the faith through the agonies of torture and the hour of death ; men who scorned to recant even when confronted with the rack, the scaffold, and the stake ; men who, with unconquerable fortitude, defied the vengeance and the malice of their fiery persecutors—who regarded the things of this world as nothing in comparison with their hopes of salvation in the world to come—and who in their dying moments, amidst insults, revilings, and reproaches, could, with invincible constancy, exclaim, “So long as the breath is in our bodies we will never deny our Lord Christ and his known truth.” These are the holy champions whom we must venerate and revere as the great founders of Anglican Protestantism ; for the Reformation in England was long after its origin rather a sordid compromise between

the people and their rulers, respecting the worldly interests and temporalities of the Church, than an attempt to establish a sublime system of religion based upon the broad and immoveable foundations of Evangelic Truth.

The fiery progress of the Reformation in Scotland offered a striking contrast to the more tranquil policy which had sufficed for the establishment of the Reformed Religion in England. The Scottish people had been immemorially distinguished for their rude and lawless spirit, as well as for their sturdy love of independence. Accustomed to the marauding life of border warfare, and rendered martial by the feuds and rivalries in which they perpetually engaged, all wrongs were redressed by the hand of force, and all insults avenged by the arm of might. Civilisation could neither tame their ungovernable passions, nor soften their ferocious manners. In learning and the arts, they had made but little progress, and even their rude songs of border minstrelsy were principally used as incitements to deeds of rapine, violence, and blood. During the darkened ages of medieval barbarism, the only means of keeping a people so turbulent and illiterate under restraint, was to allure them into submission by imposing upon their credulity and ignorance,—accordingly, the ecclesiastics of those times invented a variety of pious frauds, for the purpose of striking terror into the minds of men, over whom all arguments and reason were exerted in vain. But these deceptions, though originally employed only for meritorious ends, soon became, when entrusted to

evil hands, converted into fearful engines of tyranny and extortion. The priesthood, having at length obtained a complete mastery over the minds of the people, proceeded to demand large sums of money for the pretended maintenance of the church ; and where such exactions were refused by the laity, the threat of excommunication soon reduced the unfortunate expostulators to obedience. The nature of their profession admitted the clergy at all times and at all seasons to the presence of the credulous and the timid, the dying and the sick, and in the intercourse thus afforded, they contrived to prevail upon the unhappy sufferers to surrender a large proportion of their riches to the church, by declaring that such a sacrifice would atone for all past offences, and render the givers acceptable to the Almighty, however sinful might have been their former lives. Impressed by these sacred admonitions, many individuals were so filled with remorse and fear that they offered the most munificent presents to the church, hoping such a propitiation would appease the anger of the Deity and ensure their salvation in the world to come. As the superstition and credulity of the people increased, the clergy enlarged their claims and heightened their demands ; one fiction only passed away to produce another, more improbable and inconsistent—oftentimes the more glaring and transparent the absurdity of the miracle, the larger the amount of treasure it produced. The sale of indulgences, prayers for the dead, the privilege of touching sacred relics, and a variety of scandalous profanities, served to fill the coffers of the church with abundance ; and the

money thus collected being applied to the purchase of land, half the estates in the kingdom became converted into ecclesiastical property. The rapacity of the clergy, however, knew no bounds, for in addition to these monstrous usurpations they obtained a law which ordained that the estates and worldly goods of all persons dying intestate, should be transferred to the bishop of the diocese for the service and support of the church, a regulation that gave the greatest opportunities for mal-appropriation, when the administrators were not above temptation. As might naturally be anticipated, the zeal and ardour which the clergy had formerly shown to perform laudable works, abated in proportion as the success of these nefarious schemes advanced to perfection. The priests were, for the most part, profoundly ignorant. They became negligent in attending to the duties of the ministry, and surrendered themselves to a life of dissoluteness and sensual excess. The hierarchy of this degraded priesthood excelled their inferiors in infamy and vice. They professed to practice celibacy, yet openly committed adultery. They were debauched and dissipated in their habits, without even sufficient decency to veil their depravity from the world. Their ambition was unbounded, their avarice insatiable. Churchmen aspired to enjoy all the chief places of honour in the state to the exclusion of the nobles and the gentry. Men of mean extraction, insolent and offensive in their bearing, and without any pretence to learning, raised themselves to the principal offices of the church by the most corrupt means, and in this capacity exercised

power with unscrupulous severity. In the ecclesiastical courts of law, where bishops alone presided, the proceedings were conducted in a most tyrannical manner, and as in an age of superstition none dared to dispute an authority so sacred and reverend as that of the rulers of the church, the verdicts delivered in these tribunals were beyond the reach of appeal. The time, however, at length arrived when these iniquities had sufficiently ripened for destruction.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, the hierarchy of the Romish Church in Scotland had descended to the lowest depths of infamy and degradation. Everything was rapidly preparing for their final downfall and destruction. The revival of learning cast discredit upon their ignorance. The progress of free enquiry exposed the arrogance and mendacity of their absurd pretensions. The taste for metaphysical speculation occasioned the sophistries and the errors of their theological doctrines to be detected. Principles of religious belief, which they had hitherto been accustomed to propound gravely, as certain and incontrovertible, were found wholly irreconcilable to reason, when subjected to the searching analysis of controversial argument and erudite investigation. Fabulous devices and impious superstitions, which had for ages served them to deceive the credulous and the ignorant, were proved impostures of the most contemptible character. The hideous system of priestcraft by which they had so long obscured the lustre of the true religion, was declared scandalous and detestable. Their false miracles, their lying wonders, their profane

legenda, their idolatrous practices, were exposed to public derision. The images they had set up were threatened with demolition. The profanations they had committed in the sanctuary were denounced. The idols with which they had defiled the temple were condemned as abominations no longer to be tolerated. That stupendous structure of human error which they had assisted to erect, tottered upon its very foundation. Their fate was sealed. Their ruin was at hand.

To encounter such a fiery and perilous ordeal as the Reformation, the members of the Scottish Prelacy were wholly unprepared. Like the foolish virgins in the Parable, their lamps were untrimmed and without oil. Philosophers and schoolmen despised their impostures and ridiculed their incapacity. Nobles, filled with jealousy and impelled by ambition, were eager to plunder their riches and acquire their power. Men of independent minds desired to escape from the thralldom of their spiritual rule. The inferior clergy only sought an excuse to rebel against their domination. The people, impatient under their exactions, and exasperated by their extortions, were burning for retribution and revenge. Good men regarded the vices and criminalities of their lives with indignation and disgust. Wise men were scandalised at the corruptions through which religion passed in their hands. Royalty, and a faction of the nobility, alone continued to show them the countenance of favour; but such support, powerful as it might occasionally prove, was insufficient to save them from sinking to that abyss of ruin, on the verge of which they stood.

The concluding half of the sixteenth century embraces the particular epoch in which the Reformation made its greatest progress among the European states. The ascendancy which Protestantism then attained, has scarcely since been equalled, certainly never surpassed. For a period it appeared as though the might of Papal Rome was about to pass away for ever. In England, under the rule of Elizabeth, all but a mere fraction of her subjects were inflexibly attached to the doctrines of the Protestant faith. In France, the Catholics, though a majority, were compelled to accede to a pacification, which allowed the Huguenots sufficient toleration for the practice of their religion. In the Northern Netherlands, the Spanish Inquisition was abolished, and the political as well as the religious independence of the States obtained. In Switzerland there were as many Protestant Cantons as there were Catholic. In Sweden, in Denmark, in Germany, and in the Palatinate, the Lutheran tenets were completely triumphant. Wherever the Teutonic language was spoken, Protestantism met with a welcome reception. But, perhaps, in no part of Europe had the great work found such willing labourers to effect its accomplishment as in Scotland, and nowhere in the issue of the movement was Popery so effectually eradicated beyond the possibility of revival or restoration. Yet although the great mass of the Scotch people adopted the principles of the Reformation with avidity, and defended them with indomitable fortitude, many dangers beset the cause of the Reformers long after their first victories had been obtained. As the vices of the Romish

hierarchy in Scotland were flagitious in the extreme, so was the re-action against them proportionably violent and intemperate. In no part of Europe had the ecclesiastics practised their corruptions with such barefaced audacity and such unblushing effrontery. Nowhere had the Prelacy shown such a haughty and unbending superiority, with so little real pretence either to sanctity or learning, as had the Episcopal rulers of the Scottish Church. Nowhere had the errors and superstitions of the Papal theology been pointed out in a more clear and convincing light. Hence, the movement against Popery in Scotland was rapid, decisive, and irrepressible. Inspired by the declamatory harangues of such energetic and enthusiastic teachers as Willock and Knox, indignant at the cruel persecutions of such martyrs as Wisheart and Mill, incited to revenge by listening to the powerful eloquence of the Marian exiles, jealous of their sovereigns, and urged into action by the fiery spirit of their natural leaders the nobles, the Scottish nation brought in the Reformation with an outstretched, a vigorous, and a determined arm. It was emphatically the work of the people. Sometimes Royalty was arrayed against them, sometimes a faction of the nobles opposed them, sometimes the armies of a foreign nation were brought in to subdue them, but all in vain. Nothing short of the complete eradication and extinction of Popery would satisfy them. They would listen to no proposals of concession, nor agree to any terms of compromise. It was for Calvinism they had taken up arms, and Calvinism they deter-

mined to establish. In advancing to the accomplishment of their purpose, they displayed all that courage and ferocity which had so long been their national characteristic. Nothing could arrest their impetuosity or moderate their zeal. They assassinated an obnoxious Cardinal of the Romish Church, and then openly justified the deed. They deposed Regent after Regent. One sovereign they conquered and imprisoned, another they insulted and led captive. If their adversaries called in the aid of Catholic France, they turned to Protestant England for support. At length victory declared in their favour. Their cause was triumphant. Their mission was accomplished. Scarcely a vestige or a remnant of the ancient church remained. And then arose the danger of success. Their leaders desired to moderate those fiery and fanatic passions which had been roused amidst the heat of the conflict, but like the troubled ocean, lashed into fury by the rage of the elements, wave after wave rolled on with impetuous force long after the winds were stilled and the tempest had subsided. Knox attempted to establish a modified episcopacy, so as to retain in some degree a resemblance to the ancient government and discipline of the church, but in this design he was completely overruled by his impatient followers and compelled to carry out the Presbyterian principle to its fullest extent. His proposal relative to the Deacons of the new fabric, they ridiculed as a "devout imagination," for Prelacy in their sight was but Popery in disguise. No word sounded so obnoxiously in the ears of the Scottish Reformers as the term Bishop, hence whenever a

restoration of Episcopacy was projected they compared the performance of such a work to a rebuilding of the Walls of Jericho, and likened the authority of a Prelacy to the precedence of Dagon. After making several considerable concessions, James VI. contrived, in defiance of a formidable opposition, to establish a system of moderate Episcopacy, that appeared likely to meet the views of all parties in the Reformed Church, except the most bigoted and intolerant. The principal plea urged in favour of a revival of Episcopacy was, the introduction of ministers to the Parliament, in order to save the kirk from falling into poverty and contempt. "I mean not," said James, "to bring in Papistical or Anglican bishops, but only that the best and wisest of the ministry should be selected by your Assembly to have a place in council and in Parliament, to sit upon their own affairs and not to stand at the door like poor supplicants utterly despised and disregarded." These bishops, or commissioners as they were designated, to avoid offence, however, proved in the sequel to be dignitaries of a very harmless and inoffensive character, for their authority, hedged in and limited by a thousand precautionary conditions, gave them a superiority over the clergy which was in reality far more nominal than real. Thus, they were to propose nothing in Parliament in the name of the kirk, without its special direction; they were to claim no higher power than the rest of their brethren in matters of discipline, visitation, and other points of church government, and they were to be as amenable to censure in all general assemblies as the humblest minister

of the kirk. It is difficult to conceive what reasonable objections could have been raised against an order of churchmen whose jurisdiction was to be so narrow and restricted, yet even this toleration of the Prelatical principle, humble as it was, gave marked offence to the sterner Presbyterians, who openly denounced it in the presence of the King, as a systematic design to re-establish Popery and renew the reign of Antichrist. Calderwood, the historian and the ablest advocate of the Presbyterian party, stigmatised it as such in severe language. "Thus," said he, "the Trojan horse, the Episcopacy, was brought in covered with caveats that the danger might not be seen; which notwithstanding was seen of many and opposed unto; considering it to be better to hold thieves at the door, than to have an eye unto them in the house that they steal not; for these commissioners, voters in Parliament, afterwards bishops, did violate their caveats as easily as Sampson did the cords wherewith he was bound."

The opening of the seventeenth century produced an important change with regard to the reciprocal relations in which England and Scotland had hitherto stood. In the year 1603, Queen Elizabeth died, and the Scottish King uniting the two nations under one ruler, ascended the throne as James I. Never was an accession of power so acceptable to any monarch as this to James. In his ancient inheritance the church had been his master. In his new inheritance it became his slave. Instead of the Presbyterian preachers who had insulted him openly in the kirk and the Assembly, he became surrounded by a powerful yet servile hierarchy, who

affected to regard him as a being entrusted to perform a divine mission, and endowed with prerogatives which might be exercised above the reach of human censure or reproach. James was not long in perceiving what a formidable weapon had passed into his hands, nor slow to discover the weighty service to which it might be applied.

It had always been a leading object in the policy of Queen Elizabeth, to prevent the religious differences of her subjects from ripening into faction or rebellion, by extending to all parties of whatever faith, as large an amount of toleration as might be compatible with the safety and stability of her government. Thus, she treated the Papists with remarkable lenity, until Pope Pius V. published his bull against her authority, and the Jesuits plotted to take away her life. Even then she attempted to discriminate between "papists in conscience and papists in faction." "Let us not follow our sister's example," said she, "but rather show that our reformation tendeth to peace and not to cruelty." So with the Puritans she endeavoured to make a similar distinction, for Walsingham, in speaking of her conduct towards the sectaries, remarks, "their zeal was not condemned, only their violence was sometimes censured, until their motives appeared to be no more zeal, no more conscience, but mere faction and division." Queen Elizabeth's opinions upon the subject of religion, were anything but bigoted. She was drawn towards Protestantism by the peculiarities of her interests and position as the sovereign of England, yet she retained a lurking attachment for many forms and ceremonies

of the Romish Church, which seemed far from reconcilable with an ardent desire to support the leading principles of the Reformation. In her anxiety to bring dissentients as much as possible within the pale of the Anglican Church, she acted in such a way as to appear occasionally very inconsistent. Thus, she was understood to be not averse to listen to the doctrine of the real presence, she permitted images to be placed in churches, while in her private chapel she ordered all the gorgeous and magnificent rites of the ancient mode of worship to be retained, and kept a crucifix with tapers constantly burning before it at the altar. Even the celibacy of the clergy she would have insisted upon, but for the zealous remonstrances of Parker and Cecil. On the other hand, she commanded Walsingham to propose to the Puritans in her name, the abolition of the three ceremonies, kneeling at the communion, wearing the surplice, and the cross in baptism, if they would afterwards conform. A Lutheran Protestant found more favour in her sight than a Calvinist, but she preferred even Calvinists to Papists, because the latter were always attempting to subvert her government or procure her assassination. Religion was with her a secondary consideration, and kept quite subordinate, in her general policy, to affairs of state. If the Catholics had not supported the cause of her rival the Queen of Scots, and the Puritans had abstained from entering the House of Commons, she would have permitted these contentious factions to pursue their polemical disputes undisturbed, but when they aspired to invade a territory so sacred as her

sovereign authority, she was compelled in self-defence to interfere and repress them. In establishing the constitution and regulating the discipline of the Reformed Anglican Church, Queen Elizabeth and her principal advisers made it their especial aim to frame the Articles of Religion in a manner admitting such latitude of belief, that both Romanists and Calvinists might enter the same temple, and partake of the same communion. Hence, while the more obnoxious vanities and superstitions of the Romish faith were expunged and set aside as blasphemous, several ceremonials pertaining to the ancient form of worship were ordered to be retained. Queen Elizabeth considered, and very justly so, that the Protestant Church of England should be constituted upon such a system of doctrine and discipline, so as to form a wise and temperate compromise between Rome and Geneva; accordingly, where ceremonies and practices unimportant in themselves, as regards the practical utility or real efficacy of religion, were desired by any large section of her subjects, she was willing to allow such innovations to be introduced, imagining concessions of this kind tended to lessen dissent, as well as to increase the number of those who stood well-affected towards the national church. By thus removing the scruples of the Puritan, and paying some respect to the prejudices of the Papist, she contrived to make the majority of her people conform to the particular mode of faith she prescribed, while a toleration so liberal and expanded for such an age, enabled her at the same time to readily distinguish those rebellious traitors who used

religion only as a colourable pretext for pursuing treasonable designs; and such offenders, when detected, she punished with a most firm and unrelenting hand. Martyrs there certainly were in her reign, yet so clearly was their guilt established before they were put to the stake, that all but a mere fraction of the people considered the punishment of such criminals as expedient and just. Probably, not one spectator in fifty who witnessed the execution of Campian would have stepped across the road to release either him or his fellow-sufferers, so richly merited did the people deem the condemnation of these despicable and infandous villains. By thus shaping her policy, with reference to ecclesiastical affairs, in such a pliable manner as to leave all reasonable and well-disposed persons no excuse for not conforming at least outwardly to the mode of faith authorised by the state, Queen Elizabeth confined religious factions to so narrow a ground, that they were easily kept under control, and repressed when rebellious. In a letter to a person in France, Walsingham has well explained the proceedings of his royal mistress, with regard to the religious differences of her subjects, and justified her conduct:—
“Consciences,” said he, “are not to be forced but to be won, and reduced by force of truth with the aid of time, and use of all good means of instruction and persuasion. Cases of conscience when they exceed their bounds and grow to be matter of faction, lose their nature; and sovereign princes ought distinctly to punish their practices and contempt, though coloured with the pretence of conscience and religion.” That the Queen’s

policy, though sometimes apparently inconsistent and unintelligible, was in the main sagacious and wise, the issue fully proved, since, during a reign of forty years, the Protestant Church she established not only flourished in unbroken prosperity, but attained a stability of foundation which through all subsequent ages, no assaults however vigorous have yet been able to shake or overthrow.

Before the close of Queen Elizabeth's rule, however, episcopacy had unquestionably begun to show forth a domineering spirit and set up high pretensions, many persecutions and severities having been inflicted upon nonconformists by such prelates as Whitgift and Aylmer which would not have been sanctioned by Parker or Jewell. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the bishops of the Reformed Anglican Church had never considered episcopacy as indispensably necessary to the proper government of the church, or regarded it as of divine origin; on the contrary, many of the most eminent and learned of their body, had openly condemned prelacy as prejudicial to the interests of religion, and distinctly stated that bishops and priests were of the same order. Such opinions, however, being displeasing to Queen Elizabeth, who set a high value upon episcopacy as an institution, and positively refused even to listen to any proposals for its abolition, the majority of the bishops had before the close of her reign, discarded their Calvinistic prejudices, and began to entertain very different ideas respecting the importance and authority of their order. These prelates indeed, would have carried their intole-

rance to as great a height as either Bonner or Gardiner had dared to do in the reign of Queen Mary, but for the firm behaviour and preponderating influence of such sagacious statesmen as Walsingham and Burleigh, who saw clearly, that where persecution removed one zealot or fanatic, it caused ten to rise up, each endowed with all the earnestness and enthusiasm of the sacrificed offender. Armed with the dangerous weapons of that stronghold of ecclesiastical tyranny, the Court of High Commission, the bishops would soon have transgressed all bounds of equity and justice had not the Queen by the advice of her Privy Council put some restraint upon their rash and impolitic proceedings. Lord Burleigh in particular, was so indignant at Whitgift's violent usage of the Puritans, that he wrote that prelate a strong remonstrance, declaring, that the Articles of Examination employed by the bishops, were "so curiously penned, so full of branches and circumstances, as he thought the inquisitors of Spain used not so many questions to comprehend and to trap their preys." Amid the closing scenes of Queen Elizabeth's reign, an acute observer might doubtless have noticed the commencement of that dangerous schism between the high church or episcopal party and the Calvinistic reformers, which was insidiously growing wider and wider, as well as becoming more hopeless to appease. Lord Bacon in his *Advertisement respecting the Controversies of the Church*, pointedly referred to the arrogant pretensions of the bishops, who had assumed that it was indispensably necessary for priests to receive an episcopal ordination, regularly

derived from apostolic origin, before they could either be considered legally called to the ministry, or canonically authorised to fulfil the sacred functions of the sacerdotal office. "Yea, and some indiscreet persons," said he, "have been bold in open preaching to use dishonourable and derogatory speech and censure of the churches abroad; and that so far, as some of our men ordained in foreign parts have been pronounced to be no lawful ministers." Queen Elizabeth herself was far from being inattentive to these displays of prelatical ambition; but so long as the bishops implicitly acknowledged the royal supremacy, she was rather inclined to exalt than to underrate their pretensions.

When James I. ascended the English throne, the Protestant Reformation had become so firmly established, both in England and Scotland, that those doubts which many persons had hitherto entertained respecting the stability of the Reformed faith might be said to have either subsided, or vanished entirely away. The Papists, reduced in number, detested by the people, and rendered obnoxious by the frequent exposures of their treasonable designs, had fallen to the humiliating position of a vanquished and insignificant party; while the Protestants, strengthened by an undisturbed possession of forty years, included within their ranks nine-tenths of the population. Indeed, with the exception of a powerful section of the nobles and the gentry, the Roman Catholics had no leaders upon whom they could rely, the great majority of the Romish priesthood having quietly conformed to the national religion, or passed into lands more favourable to the

practice of their creed. Under the rule of Queen Elizabeth, Protestants of all denominations, however widely they might differ upon points of faith, or matters of church government, had been compelled to maintain a close and compact union, lest their formidable adversaries, the Papists, should take advantage of their divisions to regain the ascendancy. Thus, Puritans and Nonconformists not only held her government in high respect, but even when suffering for their offences declared themselves loyal to her person, knowing too well that the very existence of Protestantism in England depended upon her presence and success. At the accession of King James, a considerable change had taken place in the relative position of Papist and Protestant, as compared with that which had existed upon the accession of Elizabeth. There were no longer any apprehensions that Popery would be re-established in England, that the Pope would be enabled to depose an English sovereign, or that the armies of Spain would introduce the Inquisition, and dictate from Westminster the eradication of the Reformed religion. But in proportion as these dangers passed away, others sprang up in the bosom of the Anglican Church scarcely less perilous and distracting in their consequences. King James, while ruling Scotland, had been incessantly tormented by the Presbyterian clergy of that nation, and finding himself at length placed in a position to retaliate the insults he had formerly received, the persecution of Nonconformists became the uppermost idea in his mind. The prelates of the Church of England, annoyed by the bold assaults and scandalous libels of

the English Puritan, were equally eager for revenge, and a strict alliance being formed between them and the King, the task of repressing sectarianism in both nations was commenced at once, and carried on with all that rancour and animosity so peculiar to polemical disputes. The hierarchy of the Anglican church, far from desiring to treat the remnant of the Catholics with severity, believed the Church of Rome which retained the episcopal order, to approach much nearer to their own standard of religious orthodoxy than did the Presbyterian system instituted by the Calvinists; hence, they not only preferred Papists to Puritans, but lent every energy they possessed to bring the latter sect under the yoke of subjugation and obedience. To accomplish this difficult undertaking, it was necessary to gain the perfect co-operation both of Royalty and its counsellors, since no change could be effected in the spiritual or temporal government of the Church unless the sanction of the Crown had been previously obtained. Hence the episcopal party and its supporters began to preach up the doctrines of high prerogative and passive obedience, hoping that such flattery and servility would induce the King to aid them in repressing the stubborn and rebellious sectaries. Nor were they deceived, for Royalty, hard pressed by the Commons, who were rising to emancipate themselves from the fetters of prerogative, stood ready to receive the assistance of any ally that could bring influence and weight to the support of its cause. Thus, the Church and the Crown entered into a stern and determined alliance for mutual defence—the one seeking to cir-

cumscribe liberty of conscience in matters of religion, the other striving to exclude liberty of thought from matters of state.

In proportion as the episcopal party endeavoured to discourage and eradicate the Puritans by persecution, did the numbers, the influence, and the importance of this body increase. King James had from the moment of his entrance into England determined upon their extermination, and, instigated by the high churchmen who were called to his councils, he declared, "that all dissenters from the established church were insufferable in any well-governed commonwealth; and farther, that if they did not speedily conform, he would harrie them out of the land or perhaps do worse." But this violent language of menace, so far from intimidating those to whom it was addressed, only tended to make their opposition the more obstinate and stubborn, and the very declarations which the King imagined would be sufficient to annihilate the sectaries, had the contrary effect of increasing their popularity and strength. Numbers, who had hitherto stood aloof from the Puritans, began to listen favourably to their claims when observing the tendency of the episcopal party to Arminianism; and many persons, perhaps utterly indifferent to religion, joined the ranks of religious dissent with a view to use it as an instrument for the assertion of their political rights. Thus, the party which under Elizabeth had been merely a sect, grew up under James to be a faction formidable enough to require all the energies and artifices of Royalty to prevent the encroachments it proposed; and the Puri-

tan, who was formerly content with merely praying for the disusage of some trifling ceremony in the services of the church, began to demand boldly the abolition of episcopacy, and a total reconstitution of the ecclesiastical government. So early as the celebrated Conference, held at Hampton Court in the year 1604, for the purpose of restoring harmony to the Church, the Calvinistic Divines had petitioned the King to adopt the Presbyterian system in the government of the Anglican Church. Their prayer, however, met with a very ungracious reception, for James harshly replied, "If you aim at a Scottish Presbytery, it agreeth as well with Monarchy as God and the Devil. Then Jack, and Tom, and Will, and Dick, shall meet and censure me and my council. Therefore, I reiterate my former speech, *Le roi s'avisera*. Stay, I pray for one seven years before you demand that, and then if you find me grow fat and pursy, I may perchance hearken unto you, for that government will keep me in breath and give me work enough. I approve the use and calling of Bishops in the Church, for it is my aphorism, No Bishop, No King."

Although King James entertained such strong feelings of animosity against all Nonconformists and schismatics, yet he possessed sufficient prudence and sagacity to refrain from proceeding too harshly against either the Scottish Calvinists or the English Puritans, when he discovered their influence and numbers. He talked loudly, but he performed little. He made large threats, but his actions did not correspond. He proposed great changes, but when the promised time for

putting them into operation arrived, he found excuses for delay. The result of this cautious and temporising policy was, that he contrived to keep the sectaries under subordination so long as he reigned. In the Canons, published by Convocation in the year 1606, he certainly permitted some extravagant and offensive doctrines to be set forth, which placed the King's absolute power wholly beyond the law, and declared the functions both of king and priest to be the prerogatives of birthright; yet, if a general view be taken of the various alterations of discipline, effected in the Scottish and Anglican Churches during his reign, an impartial observer will probably see little to censure or condemn. Among the principal changes which the King prescribed, were the following.—All farther alienation of church lands was to cease, leases for more than one-and-twenty years being declared void. The marriage of the clergy, which had only been connived at under his predecessor, and never legitimated, was made legal by reviving the statute of Edward VI. The rite of baptism was no longer to be performed by laymen, or unlawful ministers. The authority of the bishops to pronounce sentence of excommunication was taken away; contumacy and disobedience being punished by the issue of a writ from the Court of Chancery against the offenders. Imprisonment for life was substituted for the burning of heretics, in order to put an end to those disgraceful exhibitions of cruelty and barbarism. The Liturgy underwent various alterations; thus, for instance, absolution was defined a remission of sins, and to the confirmation of

children, the word examination was added. A number of divines, including some of the most eminent Nonconformists, were engaged to undertake a translation of the Bible, and one catechism was to be made and used in all places. Schools and teachers were to be provided for the education of the poor. Moderation was recommended to be used in the ecclesiastical courts, and pluralities were forbidden, unless the incumbents found other preachers to perform the required duties of the supernumerary livings. These regulations being put in force, conformity was demanded, and about three hundred ministers refusing to obey, their livings were sequestered and transferred to others. The conduct of James, with regard to the Scottish Church, was equally moderate; thus, the five points of ceremony, known as the Articles of Perth, which he forcibly compelled the Kirk to adopt, were most reasonable and judicious. They were,—I. That the Eucharist should be received in a kneeling posture. II. That it might be received in private, in cases of extreme sickness. III. That baptism might in certain cases be privately administered. IV. That the youth should receive episcopal confirmation. V. That the Birth, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Saviour, with that of the Descent from the Holy Ghost, should be observed as holidays. Even these regulations, temperate and necessary as they were, met with such a marked opposition from the Scottish clergy, that the King, who had intended to compel them to use the English Liturgy instead of their own rituals, deemed it advisable to defer this innovation

sine die. Nothing could be more irregular than the manner in which the services of the Scottish Church were conducted, each preacher providing his own peculiar forms of ritual, and differing more or less from his neighbour; yet the Scottish clergy, in a body, not only resolutely refused to make an approach to uniformity, by adopting the Liturgy of the Anglican Church, but declared that admirable compilation of prayer to be "a scandalous and Popish heresy." In order to induce James not to press the introduction of the Liturgy, it was urged by the Presbyterian leaders that all changes, however salutary or obviously beneficial, are dangerous on account of the excitement their novelty produces, and that in the present temper of the nation it would be imprudent to risk a measure so obnoxious to the people; yet we may very well question whether these ministers would have referred so anxiously to the settled state of the Church, its confirmation by so many acts of Parliament, and the manifold experience of God's blessings it had enjoyed, if the proposed innovation had flattered their Calvinistic propensities or stimulated their Puritanical zeal, instead of aiming to approximate the services of the Scottish Church to those of the Anglican establishment. That the Church of England faithfully represented the great principles of the Reformation under James we have the weighty testimony of Sully to prove, for this distinguished statesman, upon visiting England, after the death of Queen Elizabeth, declared that if the French Protestants had retained the same advantages of order and decency in their form of

worship, there would have been many thousands more Protestants in France.

For a considerable period after the origin of the Reformation, the differences between English Protestants had been principally confined to matters of ceremony, and modes of church government; but towards the conclusion of the reign of King James, a controversy arose respecting some obscure points of metaphysical theology, which was carried on with such remarkable acrimony that the separation between the Episcopalian party and the Puritans became wider than ever. It was remarked by Sir William Temple, that the English Reformation, long after its establishment, agreed much with the Calvinists in point of doctrine, though more with the Lutherans in point of discipline; an observation which will be fully verified when the works of the principal theological writers on the Reformed side, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, are minutely examined. Thus, Andrews, Parker, Sandys, Nowell, and all the most eminent bishops, taught the doctrines of Calvin unreservedly; and even those churchmen who long after the accession of James were the most zealous in supporting the absurd pretensions of Royalty in the civil government of the state, gave their assent distinctly upon many occasions to the theories of original sin, election, and predestination, as inculcated by the leading divines of the Genevan Church. Even Hooker, who may be regarded as one of the most staunch defenders of the orthodox Church of England principles, pronounced Calvin "to have been a man superior

in wisdom to any other divine that France had produced." Whitgift, the Primate, also, who declared that James, when refuting the Nonconformist divines, at Hampton Court, "verily spake by the special assistance of the Spirit," had drawn up under Elizabeth the Lambeth Articles, six of which assert the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination in the most explicit terms. King James himself, educated in the Calvinistic belief, fully accepted its leading principles; although he objected strongly to the methods of church government proposed by the great founders of this peculiar dissent.

In the early part of the seventeenth century, some remarkable tenets were promulgated in Holland which, repudiating much of the sternness and austerity of Calvinism, professed to hold out to mankind the hope that Divine Justice was of a far more merciful and forgiving nature than had hitherto been supposed. About the year 1604, Arminius, a professor of theology at Leyden, published a work which attached his name subsequently to the peculiar opinions it contained, although a far more eminent philosopher, Episcopius, must in reality be regarded as the principal founder of the sect. The views which the leaders of this school held respecting the future salvation of man were far more benevolent and compassionate in their nature than those entertained by Calvin and his followers: thus, instead of subscribing to the monstrous and abominable doctrine that the Almighty has placed the greater part of mankind under a fatal necessity of committing offences, for which he has predetermined

to punish them eternally, the Arminians declared that sufficient grace is bestowed on all who are called by the Gospel to comply with that divine call and obey its precepts. When the Arminian tenets were first made public in Holland, King James was so violently opposed to them, that he persuaded the States General of that nation to deprive Vorstius of his professorship at Leyden, for holding such heretical opinions; while at the Synod of Dort (an assembly of Protestants from all the states of Europe, held in 1619, for the purpose of testing the soundness of the Arminian doctrines) he appointed divines, whose predilections for Calvinism were well known, to attend as the representatives of the Anglican Church. Neale, the Puritan historian, does not forget to allude to this in closing his observations upon the Synod of Dort, "for," says he, "King James sending over divines to join this assembly, was an open acknowledgment of the validity of ordination by mere presbyters, here being a bishop of the Church of England sitting as a private member in a synod of divines, of which a mere presbyter was the president." The English deputation gave their assent to the decision pronounced by the majority of the Synod, and seconded the intolerant Calvinists in all their violent proceedings against the unfortunate Arminians, who were dismissed the assembly and banished the country, unless they submitted to the new confession within a prescribed period. But the gross injustice and extreme severity with which the Dutch Arminians were treated by this tyrannical majority, soon excited a strong reaction in their favour, and before the synod had scarcely

concluded its labours many of those who had supported the victorious party began to repent the course they had pursued. All Europe beheld with indignation the disgraceful barbarities inflicted by Prince Maurice and the Dutch Calvinists upon such illustrious men as Barneveldt and Grotius, and nowhere was this feeling of sympathy for the persecuted minority more loudly expressed than in England. King James, and the high church party of the Anglican clergy, having been led to investigate the Arminian doctrine from the interest excited by the proceedings of the Dutch Synod, became at the conclusion of their labours so convinced of its purity and soundness, that they at length embraced the very principles they had formerly been so eager to condemn. The detestation with which the Puritans regarded Arminianism, formed another inducement for the Episcopalians to look favourably upon this doctrine, since by accepting principles so repugnant to their adversaries they were enabled to draw the line of separation between orthodoxy and dissent more plainly than ever. Heylin remarks that the king grew more moderate after the Synod of Dort, and into a better liking of those opinions he had before so strenuously laboured to silence. From this period the profession of Arminian principles was rigidly demanded by the Court and its Episcopal advisers from all candidates who sought ecclesiastical preferment; so that an elaborate disquisition in support of Arminianism, which a few years previously would have subjected its author to the penalties of fine and imprisonment, now formed one of the surest steps to be taken for the at-

tainment of a bishopric. In truth, Arminianism was in the seventeenth century the balance against the extremes of Calvinism, just as Puseyism is the reactionary sect opposed to the Evangelism of the present age.

This general acceptance of the Arminian tenets by the Episcopalian party and the Court, occasioned the Puritans such displeasure, that they resolved to enter upon a stern and systematic opposition to the Anglican Establishment; and as their forces comprised three-fourths of the Scottish, and nearly one-third of the English population, they could offer considerable resistance if unanimously inclined. A relaxation of the penal laws which had been enacted to repress the Roman Catholics, and the public expression of a desire on the part of the Court divines to reconcile the Anglican and Papal Churches by some concessions to the latter, gave umbrage to the Puritans, who were as bigoted, as overbearing, and as intolerant in their conduct as the Papists themselves. Great as might have been the errors and indiscretions of the Episcopalian party in attempting to accomodate the Reformed religion to the Church of Rome, by reviving several Popish forms and ceremonies, the fact cannot be disguised that the Puritans aimed at introducing the Presbyterian system of church government into the Anglican establishment, long before Arminianism could have furnished them with any pretext for innovation. To quote their own language, they considered "that the constitution of the hierarchy was too bad to be mended, that the very pillars of it were rotten, that the structure

ought to be raised anew, and that they were resolved to lay a new foundation, though it were at the hazard of all that was dear to them in the world." Disdaining to submit to Episcopal authority, and jealous of everything bearing the very semblance of controul, they desired to establish democracy in the church, and though they affected to make the world believe their zeal was directed against Popery alone, it is too manifest that Prelacy was equally the object of their abhorrence and dislike. Full of admiration for the practices and constitution of the Geneva church, they desired to fashion the Church of England after that model, and the abolition of Episcopacy being essential to the consummation of such a work, all their efforts were directed to render the prelatical order unpopular in the eyes of the people. Even under the tolerant rule of Queen Elizabeth, it had been the advice of Martin Marprelate to "put down lord bishops, and bring in the Reformation they looked for whether her majesty would or not," and this feeling of animosity against the hierarchy increased under her successors in a ten-fold degree. That the rulers of the Church of England enjoyed a most prejudicial authority in the Court of High Commission, and exercised their functions in that tribunal with an extreme severity is certain, yet the Puritans would have been equally dissatisfied and contumacious had the Episcopal order been filled by men possessed of the most perfect temper and discretion. In truth, the Puritan demanded an unlimited liberty in the choice of church government, which would have been just as prejudicial to the true interests

of religion as that absurd and servile obedience required to this day by the Papacy, from all who enter within the pale of her spiritual jurisdiction.

However erroneous might have been the policy which the Anglican prelacy pursued in persecuting the sectaries for speaking in derogation of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, the most bigoted enemies of episcopacy must confess, that the bishops were eminently superior to their Puritanical adversaries in point of erudition and theological learning. Milton has acknowledged the inferiority displayed by the Nonconformist divines in the polemical controversy respecting the Arminian heresy, and the truth of this admission from so high an authority, cannot be questioned, since the inveterate enmity he bore against the episcopal order is visible in almost every page of his political writings. But it was the spirit of that age, and has been of nearly every succeeding one, for the people at large to regard the bishops of the Church of England with feelings of envy and uncharitableness, as well as to delight in holding them up as objects of public odium and disrespect, although it would perhaps be no exaggeration to state, that their order, since the Reformation, has produced the most learned and able body of divines, that any Church in Christendom has been adorned with from the time of the Apostles. By interfering improperly with the political questions of the state, and attempting to draw the bonds of conformity to the Church establishment with too harsh a hand, the bishops had unfortunately passed beyond their proper

province, yet, it must be borne in mind, that they were often incautiously led to the commission of error, by the daring and rebellious proceedings of those infatuated enthusiasts who laboured to bring ruin upon the Church, and to lay her temples level with the dust. The advocacy of those who professed to favour episcopacy was lukewarm and fainthearted indeed, when compared with the fervour and enthusiasm of those who ranged themselves against it, and the remark of Lord Falkland was not less sarcastic than true, when he observed, that the bishops were hated by their enemies, worse than the devil, and loved by their friends, less than a dinner.

One of the most dangerous instruments employed by the Puritans to procure the subversion of the Church, was the substitution of extemporal preaching in the place of prayer. The founders of the Anglican Reformation had always attached far more importance to the proper performance of the ordained services of the Church, than to the delivery of scriptural discourses, the latter being considered by them as a practice rather supererogatory than otherwise. The sectaries entertained very different opinions, for Scripture, according to their narrow views, possessed no efficacy until explained by sermons. Hence, they declared, that reading the Bible only tended to farther condemnation, unless the sacred word was at the same time expounded by ministers, who possessed the gifts real or fancied, of interpreting its meaning and explaining its intent. Each of their preachers full of overweening presumption, desired to fashion the Liturgy

after his own conceptions of propriety, instead of adhering to the form prescribed by the rulers of the church, so that if some controlling power to enforce conformity had not been stringently exercised, scarcely a vestige of the established ritual would have been retained after the lapse of a few years. Sacraments and rites were held by the Puritans to be of very secondary consideration in comparison with those mystical interpretations of scripture, known as rapt and ecstasies, without which, to quote their own language, the word had no vital operation or effectual agency. Between the Liturgy of the Church of England and the Mass Book of the Papists, they professed to see but little difference, such means as the reading of prayer being in their sight unprofitable, and wholly insufficient to procure salvation. Yet it would be difficult to conceive anything less calculated to promote the spiritual instruction of their congregations, than the wild and frenzied rhapsodies poured forth by the puritanical divines, in what were termed, their moments of inspiration. They had visions, and attempted to describe them. At one time they held interviews with angels, at another, they wrestled with devils. In these "prophesyings," as such rants were designated, the frantic preacher delivered an extemporal harangue, denouncing all persons placed in authority, whether king, prince, or prelate, and concluded it by inciting the audience to forward the good work of pulling down such abominations, in order to make room for the exaltation of the godly and elect. They went confessedly indeed, "*to speak in the Steeple House against the Priest,*"

their great aim being to reduce all the orders of the hierarchy to one common level. Insisting upon the assertion, that no authority can be cited from Scripture to warrant the establishment of episcopal government, they laboured far more earnestly to undermine the foundations of the prelatical institution, than to fulfil the more important duties of their sacred office, and as the issue of events fully proved that parity in the ministry they so much desired to establish, only served when attained to engender an anarchy in the church, at once subversive of all order and discipline as well as fatal to all decency and decorum.

Among the numerous characteristics of the Puritans, none was more striking than that peculiar appearance of extreme sanctity which they invariably assumed in all seasons and in all places. To confer upon their manners and deportment an air of serious gravity, which they pretended should be inseparable from a holy and devout life, they resorted to a variety of absurd fashions, such as wearing the hair lank and smooth, altering the voice to a monotonous and melancholy tone, and employing a peculiar dress, remarkable for the absence of everything approaching to ornament or decoration. Morose and gloomy themselves, they desired to cast the dark shadows of their despondency over the whole face of society, and renouncing pleasures of every description however harmless, they occupied their time in upbraiding those persons who, less scrupulously inclined, still imagined it no crime to indulge occasionally in recreation and amusement. To display what they styled a godly zeal for the ad-

vancement of religion, they considered no abstinence they could practice too great, and no austerity too severe. To have submitted to the codes they prescribed would have been to cast over society a Cimmerian gloom of monastic asceticism, and to convert the world into a very hermitage of sorrow and despair. They forbade pleasures of every description without distinction or difference. The pursuits of the chase, and other sports peculiar to the age, they considered heinous offences. They would not even tolerate the most innocent diversions, or the most harmless amusements. To read poetry, to play on the harp, to dance, or to sing, were pleasures pernicious and poisonous to the soul. The assembly, the masque, the revel, and the drama they attempted to place under an interdict. To meet, except for the purpose of religious excitement, they held to be sinful and wicked. "Our English shorn and frizzled madams," says Prynne, "have lost all shame: so many steps in the dance, so many steps towards hell; dancing is the chief honour, plays the chief pleasure of the devil. Those who attend the playhouse are no better than devils incarnate, at least like those who hunt, play at cards, wear wigs, and visit fairs, they are in the high road to damnation." Not satisfied with inveighing against the entertainments and gaieties of the rich, the Puritans sought to circumscribe the pleasures of the humble classes by forbidding village sports. Thus, at their instigation, an injunction was issued by the judges of assize for the suppression of all wakes and revels. The bid-ales and clerk-ales of the poor were stopped, and

in short, every feast which had been kept from time immemorial for the recreation of the people, was either set aside or interrupted. Maypoles and morris dances the sectaries beheld with particular abhorrence, for the very sound of music or mirth seemed to them incompatible with that devout life which the godly should lead. The organ was excluded from the churches and from many of their houses, while half the paintings in the country were destroyed, from the fear that they were injurious to public morality. Art was regarded as a blasphemous agency when in any way applied to the decoration of places of worship. Thus, painted windows, carved furniture, costly relics, the graceful architecture of sepulchral monuments, or any curious remnant of antiquity that adorned the churches, the Puritans declared incitements to the revival of idolatry and vestiges of Popery. But it was in the observance of the Sunday that the Puritans especially sought an opportunity to display their superior godliness and sanctity. Instead of regarding the seventh day as a festival for recreation and rest after the prescribed duties of religion had been fitly performed, they desired to assimilate it to the Jewish Sabbath, by carrying out the Mosaic Law according to the most stern interpretation its precepts could receive. Extremes, however, unfortunately beget extremes, and this strict observance of the Lord's day which the Puritans demanded, induced the high church party to transgress in an opposite direction, by granting too lax an indulgence, and encouraging many sports which were far from appropriate or becoming

on that sacred day. That many of the Puritans were persons of most estimable and upright character, as well as actuated in their proceedings by the purest intentions, it would be idle to deny, yet, the easy manner in which this garb of hypocritical piety could be assumed, too often served to furnish a favourable disguise, under which crafty and designing men pursued worldly purposes that were anything but consonant with that zeal for godliness which they professed to entertain. Sir John Lamb once, when asked what condition of people the Puritans were, replied, "they seemed to the world to be such as would not swear, whore, nor be druuk, but yet they would lie cozen, and deceive; that they would frequently hear two sermons a day, and repeat the same again too, and afterwards pray, and that sometimes they would fast all the day long." This description, though rather exaggerated and highly coloured, was sufficiently correct when applied to those who took a pride in professing Puritanism from esteeming themselves under this designation, the favourites and elect of the Almighty, and who ranked all that were not their way of thinking, with the reprobate and lost; but the fact must not be overlooked, that many virtuous persons, remarkable for the sincere and unostentatious piety they practised, became classed under the same denomination, so that, as Osborn justly observes, "the title of Puritan was at length weaved of such a fashion, that it became a covering and a cloak to the wicked, but no better than a fool's coat to men truly conscientious."

After the accession of Charles I., that alliance between the Crown and the episcopalian party, which had been gradually forming during the reign of King James to establish and perpetuate regal absolutism in the civil government of the state, became complete. On the other hand, the Puritans and the principal leaders of the Opposition in Parliament were also daily approximating towards each other in their views, and concentrating their forces to place some restraint upon that exorbitant exercise of prerogative, which they considered Royalty had illegally assumed. And here especially it may be remarked, that that section of the Anglican priesthood who were favourable to the institution of prelacy and the hierarchical government of the Church, committed their most signal error; for becoming the political advocates of the cause of prerogative, the apologists of tyranny, and the servile slaves of despotism, they sternly united the influence of their order with that of the Crown, and attempted to destroy those liberties and privileges which in their conscience they knew belonged justly to the people. To render episcopal authority independent of the Crown was the ultimate design entertained by the high church party, but the temper of the times being ill adapted for the accomplishment of such an ambitious purpose, that project was for the present abandoned. Indeed, in the presence of such formidable antagonists as the Parliament and the Puritans, the Crown and the Church could only dare to anticipate victory by consenting to enter into a most frank and unreserved alliance. Believing that they were best consulting the

interests and stability of their order by supporting the extravagant pretensions of Royalty, the high church party proceeded to preach up the doctrine of passive obedience, and to proclaim the power of kings as boundless and illimitable. The church became daily profaned by the political doctrines which were disseminated from its pulpits, and the clergy before long rivalled the zeal of the Puritans in advocating the cause to which their interests, their passions, and their prejudices attached them. King James, to display his polemical learning, had frequently taken occasion during his reign to discourse in the Star-Chamber upon the royal prerogative and its unlimited extent. After selecting his favourite text, "Give the King thy judgments, O Lord, and thy righteousness to the King's son," he would earnestly advise his auditory not to meddle with the King's prerogative or honour. "Plead not," said he, "upon Puritanical principles, which make all things popular, but keep within the ancient limits." The divines who frequented the Court of Charles I., adopted these views to their fullest extent, and endeavoured, by garbled quotations, to warp the meaning of Scripture in such a manner, as to prove that kings held their authority by divine right, and were unanswerable to man either for their actions or their conduct. Dr. Sibthorp, in preaching before the Judges, said: "Only the King gives laws and does what he pleases; where his command is, there also is the power, and who dare ask him, What doest thou? When Princes order anything which subjects cannot perform, because it is contrary to the commands of

God, or to the laws of nature, or in itself impossible, they must suffer the penalty of their disobedience without murmur, complaint, or resistance ; they must manifest passive obedience where action is impracticable. "The king," said Dr. Mainwaring, in preaching before the Court at Oatlands, "is not bound to observe the laws of the realm concerning the rights and privileges of subjects, but that his royal will and pleasure in imposing taxes without consent of Parliament doth oblige the subjects' conscience, on pain of eternal damnation ; and that those who refuse obedience, transgress the laws of God, insult the King's supreme authority, and are guilty of impiety, disloyalty, and rebellion. That the authority of both Houses of Parliament is not necessary for the raising aids and subsidies, as not suitable to the exigencies of the State." While the clergy affected to speak of the authority of the Crown with such abject humility and submission, the rulers of the universities excelled their scholars in the obsequiousness and servility with which they courted the smiles of royal favour. At Oxford, the heads of the university pronounced a solemn decree that it was in no case lawful for subjects to make use of force against their princes, nor to appear either offensively or defensively in the field against them. To the lasting disgrace of Charles I., he not only listened complacently to the preposterous and blasphemous theories these compliant churchmen advanced in favour of the divine right of kings, but proceeded to reward their subservience by seizing every opportunity to procure their preferment in the Church, so that the

more sycophantic and adulatory the language of the parasites who preached before him, the higher were the dignities and honours he conferred upon them. Hating the very name of Parliaments, from the independent spirit those assemblies displayed, the King naturally felt disposed to favour an order of men who flattered him constantly with the idea that the prerogatives of Royalty were wholly sufficient for the government of the state, and that the calling or omission of Parliaments ought to depend entirely upon his pleasure and discretion. In return for these good offices, however, the clergy required to be repaid, and if they delayed to demand the requital of their services for a period, it was only because they awaited an occasion in which they should be enabled to urge their claims with greater chances of success. That they were conscious of their high deserts, may be inferred from the language they addressed to the King, even so early as his coronation. "Stand and hold fast," said the officiating prelate, "from henceforth the place to which you have been heir by the succession of your forefathers, being now delivered to you by the authority of Almighty God, and by the hands of us and all the bishops and servants of God. *And as you see the clergy to come nearer to the altar than others, so remember that in all places you give them greater honour*; that the Mediator of God and man may establish you on the kingly throne, to be a mediator between the clergy and the laity, and that you may reign for ever and ever with Jesus Christ the King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Instructions and

admonitions like these were not delivered in vain, only that Royalty in dispensing its patronage and favours drew a nice line of distinction between those churchmen who were zealous for prerogative and those who remonstrated against it. Whoever demurred or hesitated to acquiesce in the high church notions of prerogative which then prevailed at Court, soon fell into discredit and disgrace: thus, Abbot, the Primate, having refused to license the printing of Dr. Sibthorp's sermon, was compelled by the King to resign his archiepiscopal jurisdiction to a commission of churchmen, and retire to his country house in Kent; while Bishop Williams, a more strenuous adversary of the Court party, was persecuted and imprisoned for not yielding a ready assent to the extreme views which Laud and his coadjutors were labouring to carry out. Montague and Mainwaring, both of whom stood convicted by the House of Commons for the treasonable language with which they had desecrated and profaned the pulpit, and who had been condemned by a vote of that assembly as incapable of holding any ecclesiastical or secular preferment for the future, not only continued to be received at Court with the highest credit, but were elevated to episcopal sees upon the first vacancies that occurred. Sibthorp, also, reaped the reward of his servility by being advanced to one of the richest livings royal patronage could procure. Thus did the hierarchy of the Church of England neglect the true purpose of their exalted station to propagate political doctrines under the insidious disguise of religious instruction, which doctrines, as Lord Clarendon observes,

were very unfit for the place, and very scandalous for the persons themselves, who often presumed to determine things out of the verge of their own profession, and, *in ordine ad spiritualia*, gave unto Cæsar that which did not belong to him.

Upon the death of Archbishop Abbot, in 1633, Laud was elevated to the Primacy, and as he enjoyed the entire confidence of the King, but a short time was allowed to elapse before some considerable alterations were proposed both in the Anglican and in the Scottish Church. From the time of the Reformation, it had been customary for all important innovations in the Liturgy or the services of the Church, to receive the full assent of Parliament, before the clergy were required to set aside the ancient practices as prescriptively established by the existing law. Queen Elizabeth, in particular, had always shown an especial solicitude to pursue this policy; and it will be found that the Act of Uniformity, and all other fundamental changes in the constitution, discipline, or ritual of the Church of England, effected during her reign, were submitted to Parliament, and sanctioned by that Court before being rigidly enforced. King Charles and Laud in the plenitude of their power and the temerity of their ambition neglected this wise precaution, and disregarding all precedents proceeded to make important changes without previously consulting either Parliament or Convocation. The consequences of this rash and unjustifiable assumption of authority were not long in becoming apparent, and the alterations the Primate proposed, however judicious and advisable in-

their nature, evoked an opposition which frequently far outweighed any benefits that might have accrued, even if the innovations had been ever so necessary or desirable. Although the ceremonies which Laud introduced into the exterior forms of worship practised by the Anglican Church appeared when viewed collectively to indicate a greater inclination to Romanism than was consistent with a steadfast adherence to the main principles of the Reformation, yet it would be unjust to withhold from him the merit of having laboured earnestly to render the various observances of religion more decent and becoming than those which had been sanctioned by his predecessors. The virulent animosity entertained by the Puritans against the Church of England had become as deadly and uncompromising in the reign of Charles I., as the hatred with which Protestants of all denominations had regarded Catholics under Elizabeth. One-third of the English people, according to the most moderate computation, were ardent Calvinists when Laud was elevated to the Primacy ; hence, at a period, when the Calvinistic doctrines and forms of church government were held in such high repute and advocated with such earnestness by so large a proportion of the nation, it is clear that no standard of religious orthodoxy which did not unreservedly acknowledge the principles of Calvin, as taught and exemplified in the constitution and practices of the Genevan Church, could have saved the rulers of the Church of England from labouring under the imputation of attempting to revive Popery. A sagacious minister, observing in what ab-

horrence and contempt the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church of Rome were held by so considerable a number of the people as the Puritans included in their congregations, would have sternly adhered to the discipline and doctrine of the national religion, as established by law, instead of hazarding any changes which might endanger the peace of the church, without producing any adequate or compensating advantages, and which, to say the least, in many instances displayed something of the semblance and colour of Romanism on their external aspect. Laud, however, unfortunately possessed neither sufficient moderation or discretion to pursue the temperate policy of maintaining the ancient forms of worship as established by law and custom, but full of blind zeal, and eager to attain perfection, left scarcely a ceremony or practice that came under his observation unchanged. Some of the alterations he effected were praiseworthy and commendable in the highest degree, but several new ceremonies he proposed approximated so closely to those employed in the Romish Church, that they could not fail to give offence to a people who were imbued with strong prejudices against the superstitious and gaudy decorations used in the celebration of the Romanist worship, and who regarded even the simplest ornaments, when applied to beautify and adorn the temples of religion, as evidences of a latent inclination to revive Popery, and as a restoration of those corruptions which the Reformation had swept away. So heated and inflamed were the feelings of the English nation at this period upon the subject of religion, that

controversies respecting some trifling observance or unimportant ceremony, were conducted with as much solemnity, and argued with as much earnestness as if the very existence of Christianity had been staked upon the issue; and the wide discrepancies of opinion these disputatious contests produced, led to the most unhappy results, for men's minds became so divided respecting the manner in which public worship should be conducted, that forms and practices insisted upon by one party, as the very essence and spirit of religion, were authoritatively pronounced by the other, idolatrous mummeries and degrading superstitions. An age in which fanaticism, bigotry, and spiritual pride so largely predominated, naturally discountenanced toleration; it therefore only remained for the strongest and most united of the contending parties to obtain the mastery over its antagonists, and turn the victory to advantage; hence, while Laud and the high church party retained authority, they persecuted and punished their adversaries in the Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission, and when Cromwell and the Puritans gained the ascendancy they established democracy in the Church and laid the pillars of the hierarchical fabric level with the ground.

One of the first defects which Laud attempted to rectify, after his elevation to the Primacy, was the repair of the parish churches, for the remissness of Abbot had allowed many of these edifices to fall into dilapidation and decay. In some instances the renovations were perhaps prosecuted with too much regard for architectural display, and with too little reference

to the expense of the parishioners, yet the opposition manifested by the sectaries was discreditable in the extreme, for they willingly spent more money in the Courts of law contesting the authority of the Primate to order the repairs, than would have sufficed for the perfect completion of the work. The communion table, which had hitherto stood in the middle of the church, was ordered to be removed to the upper end of the chancel, and a railing required to be placed around it to protect it from the approach of dogs, or from being applied to servile purposes. Offence was, however, taken because it was designated the altar, a term which the Puritans asserted to be significant of Popery. Those who received the sacrament were compelled to kneel at the railing before the altar, a practice which called forth the greatest opposition, and frequently led the parishioners into expensive litigation, by inducing them to question the right of the archbishop to impose such a custom. But that which the sectaries viewed with more passion and disgust than anything else, was the encouragement given by the Primate to the clergy to introduce works of art for the purpose of adorning the churches, such as painted windows, altars made of carved stone, costly decorations for the communion table, consecrated knives to cut the sacramental bread, golden chalices to hold the sacramental wine, and gorgeous candelabra placed on and about the altar. A few paintings in the churches, which had escaped the devastating hand of the early reformers, were renovated, and new ones in several instances ordered to be added, but all of them referred

to scriptural subjects, and were most appropriate to the place. In the Chapel, at Lambeth Palace, the stained windows were repaired at the private cost of the archbishop, who never showed more zeal than when engaged in adding to the beauties of the sanctuary. In some churches, images, representing Christ and the twelve Apostles, were placed around the altar, and occasionally carved statues of the Popish saints were admitted. Great attention was bestowed upon the devices for sepulchral monuments, the tombs being decorated with effigies of saints, figures of angels, cherubims, and other mystic emblems. In cathedrals, especially, the skill of the architect and the genius of the sculptor were constantly in request—nothing being considered too costly or expensive for the decoration of those stately temples. The Puritans, however, looked upon such ornaments as abominations of the most impious description, and regarded those persons who attempted to justify them as little better than the pagan idolater of heathen countries, since to their austere and morose minds, no edifice was fitted for devotional purposes that did not resemble the nakedness of a dungeon and the gloom of a monastery. Great objections were also raised against the manner in which anthems and antiphonies were introduced into the church service—many of the chants prescribed by the bishops corresponding too closely with the choral worship of the Romanist Mass Book. In directing the habits of the clergy, Laud permitted his taste for splendour to carry him far beyond the bounds of propriety—several of the church dignitaries wearing

at his suggestion, copes richly embroidered with crucifixes and images of the Trinity, purchased from the Romish mass priests. The Puritans, eager to despoil the clergy of these gorgeous robes, objected to the use of the surplice altogether, styling it a rag of Popery and an idolatrous sack, although it was perfectly notorious that the soundest reformers, including Luther himself, had held this vestment to be the proper habit of the minister when engaged in reading the Liturgy or administering the Sacraments. The Genevese gown, so much admired by the Calvinists, on the contrary, was only intended to be worn by those who pronounced the discourse—laymen in those times being frequently permitted to preach after the minister had concluded the performance of the church service. But whether the preacher were ordained, or merely secular, he was compelled when delivering the sermon to assume the gown; thus, the Advertisements of Queen Elizabeth expressly direct, that “the dean and prebendaries weare a surplice with a silk hooode in the quire, but when they or others preache, to weare their hood alone;” an injunction never subsequently countermanded. The practice of making obeisance to the altar, or worshipping towards the east, became generally adopted by that portion of the Anglican clergy, who were eagerly inclined to concur with Laud in the various innovations he proposed. Thus, it gradually passed into a custom for the minister to bow towards the east, not only during the service, but upon entering or leaving the church, and where the congregations were closely crowded, a kind of avenue was formed to enable him

to see the altar. This adoration, as it was termed, was, however, rather recommended than positively enjoined, many of the clergy refusing to adopt it, while others carried it to excess. The Calvinists asserted, that such superstitious bowings could only arise from a belief that Christ was really present in the altar or sacrament; yet, Stillingfleet and several of the most eminent Protestant Bishops speak of this obeisance towards the altar as a practice derived from primitive times, and rather to be complied with than rejected. It is to be feared, however, that the postures, genuflexions, and adorations performed by the Court divines, were too often carried to extremes, either from a love of novelty and display, or from the more uncharitable desire to irritate and annoy the Puritan. The furniture of the altar was also usually of the most costly nature, and in several instances the consecration of the vessels employed for sacramental purposes appears to have been conducted with a pomp and ceremony very far removed from that simplicity which was practised and observed in the days of Apostolic Christianity. Many of the clergy took especial delight in decorating the churches with flowers, and placing innumerable candles about the altar upon saint days and holydays. These practices, while kept within the bounds of propriety, were commendable enough, but, unfortunately, it frequently happened to those persons who imbibed a taste for this manner of displaying their devotional feeling, that they became insensibly led to mistake the shadow of religion for its substance, and to lose the profit of the light in admiring the splendour of the lamp that conveyed it.

While Laud was thus indefatigably employed in reforming the various ecclesiastical ceremonies, some of his colleagues proceeded to the greater indiscretion of publicly manifesting an intention to make concessions upon several essential points of doctrine, in order to effect by mutual compromise, a species of reconciliation between the Church of England and that of Rome. A single obstacle, however, impeded the progress of the work, for the Church of Rome would yield nothing; if, therefore, as old Heylin candidly remarked, there be an agreement, it must not be their meeting us, but our going to them. This desire to establish a modified or English Popery, as it was significantly termed, appears to have been confined to a party consisting of a few bishops and their immediate supporters, the great body of the Anglican clergy remaining true to the principles of Protestantism as established at the Reformation, and refusing to lend their concurrence to the dangerous doctrinal errors these aspiring churchmen ventured to promulgate. A Venetian gentleman, who travelled through England when Laud was enjoying undisputed authority, remarks, "many bishops and divines daily embrace Catholic doctrines, though they profess them not with open mouth; they hold that the Church of Rome is the true church; that the Pope is superior to all bishops; that to him it pertains to call general councils; that it is lawful to pray for souls departed; that altars ought to be erected in all the churches; in sum, they believe all that is taught by the Church of Rome, but not by the Court of Rome." Bishop Montague, one of the

most prominent of these Romanists, in disguise, declared openly, that the points in dispute between the two churches were of a nature of which a man might be ignorant without any danger of salvation. Not satisfied with tacitly acknowledging the doctrine of purgatory by recommending prayers for the dead, he published a treatise on the invocation of saints, in which he insists, that "departed saints have not only a memory, but a more peculiar charge of their friends, and that some saints have a peculiar patronage, custody, protection, and power, as angels have also over certain persons and countries by special deputation, and that it is not impiety so to believe." Dr. Cosins, another of the Romanist faction, also went far towards confessing a belief in the real presence, "for," says he, "when our reformers took away the mass, they marred all, yet the mass was not taken away, inasmuch as the real presence of Christ remained still, otherwise, it were not a reformed but a deformed religion." That deadly error of the Romish faith, auricular confession, was also practised, in some instances with such diligence as to richly merit the animadversions and censures which the Puritans bestowed upon those who countenanced so perilous a corruption. Andrews, Bishop of Winchester, one of the most able divines who leaned towards Rome, laid particular emphasis upon the efficacy of priestly absolution. "Contrition," said he, "without confession, absolution, and deeds worthy of repentance, is not sufficient. Ministers have the two keys, power and knowledge, delivered unto them, that whose soever sins they remit upon earth

shall be remitted in heaven." Panzani, reporting to the Pope concerning the state of the Catholic religion in England after Laud's elevation, observes: "A great change is apparent in books and sermons as compared with former times, auricular confession being praised, and images well spoken of. The Pope is owned Patriarch of the West, and wishes are expressed for a reunion." It became the fashion with that section of the Anglican clergy who inclined towards Rome to inveigh against the authors of the Reformation, and to lay particular stress upon the mischiefs resulting to society from the dissolution of the monasteries; an act which, according to their opinions, almost deserved to be branded with the title of sacrilege. To describe the various steps taken by these divines in promoting Romish errors would exceed our limits; thus, some asserted auricular confession to be as necessary to salvation as meat to the body, others believed in the doctrine of penance and the proper merit of good works. Some declared for purgatory; others for preserving, reverencing, and even praying to the relics of the saints. For permitting theological writings containing such bold advances to the tenets of the Romish Church to be publicly circulated without the authors being even so much as subjected to the slightest correction or reproof, Laud must be considered highly reprehensible; and the more so, when it is remembered that he exercised the most rigid and unsparing severity against the Puritans for their libels, although many of the productions written by the Court divines were equally blameable and deserving of censure. As Sel-

den very properly remarked, the clergy should have been chained up on both sides.

When doctrines so contrary in their signification to the Articles of the Church of England, and so antagonistic to the principles of the Protestant faith, were daily diffused and boldly advocated from the pulpit, King Charles manifested no zeal and used no exertions to restrain the propagators of such glaring errors from proceeding farther in their mistaken path. There is every reason to suppose that neither he nor Laud approved of the design entertained by such misguided men as Montague or Sparrow to effect a complete reconciliation between the Anglican Church and the Roman See, yet at a period when doctrinal changes of such importance in the national religion were contemplated, and in some instances openly inculcated, it was not the part of the rulers of the Church to look on with silent indifference, unless they desired this indifference to be considered tantamount to an approval of all that was occurring. The government adopted no decided policy—the church made no vigorous protest against these innovations in religious doctrine. The Primate, it is true, wrote against the Court of Rome, and preached strongly against the worship conducted in the Queen's Chapel, but at the same time he forbade Lord Scudamore, the English Ambassador at Paris, to attend the chapel of the Huguenots, because the forms were not the same as those employed by the Church of England, and almost dispersed the Dutch and Walloon congregations established in England, by withdrawing from them the

charters which guaranteed the free exercise of their religion. Conduct so indecisive, and actions so inconsistent, induced a want of confidence, and naturally led the people to suspect that the King and Laud were secretly preparing to restore the Romish faith, an offence with which they had been so unceasingly but unjustly accused by the Puritans.

The majority of the clergy and laity of England fortunately remained sufficiently attached to Protestantism not to be led astray by the band of jesuitical churchmen, who remained within the pale of the Anglican establishment only to undermine it the more effectually; yet the unwise proceedings of this dangerous faction, passively countenanced as it was by those who professed to be the very guardians of the Protestant faith, gave a power and an influence to the enemies of the Church which were one day to be used against her with deadly effect. Hated by the Calvinists, distrusted by the Lutherans, and not even finding favour in the eyes of the Catholics themselves, the promoters of this scandalous attempt to revive the exploded errors and superstitions of the Romish faith, under the mask of a pretended expediency, had the well-merited mortification to reap the reward of their base apostacy by experiencing universal neglect, for the Pope, so far from flattering their advances, or eulogising their conduct, drew no distinction whatever between their specious approximation to Romish doctrine, and the broad heresy of Calvinism itself; thus, in the instructions given to the English nuncio from the Vatican, in the year 1639, the following passage

may be found. "Advise the clergy to desist from that foolish, nay, rather illiterate and childish custom of distinction in the Protestant and Puritan doctrine, and especially this error is so much the greater when they undertake to prove that Protestantism is a degree nearer to the Catholic faith than the other. For since both of them be without the verge of the church, it is needless hypocrisy to speak of it; yea, it begets more malice than it is worth." This pretension to an exclusive appropriation of the word Catholic to their own church and doctrine, has ever been a marked characteristic of Papal theologians, but their claim to wholly engross the title rests upon no solid foundation; for as Archbishop Bramhall said, "The Church of Rome is called a Catholic Church, and the Bishop of Rome a Catholic Bishop; yet other Churches and other Bishops may be as Catholic or even more Catholic than they."

Taking a wide and comprehensive view of the general conduct of Laud and the Episcopalian clergy as ministers of the Church of England during the period in which they held the Puritans under subjection, we think it may be safely concluded that although as a body they entertained no serious intention of acknowledging the spiritual supremacy of the Holy See, or of placing the Anglican Church once more under the temporal jurisdiction of Papal power, yet, from a series of innovations in the shape of forms and ceremonies closely approximating to those employed by the Romish Church, and from the indiscreet assent given by a few rash and intemperate divines, to some

doctrinal errors of Popery, they at least, by tacitly permitting such practices and opinions to pass uncensured, suffered themselves to appear guilty in the eyes of the nation, of having so far forsaken the broad principles of the Reformation as to lead men to doubt whether the cause of Protestantism could any longer be safely entrusted to their care. By resorting to the weapons of subtle casuistry, and by putting an equivocating construction upon ambiguous passages extracted from the vast storehouse of patristic theology, they might, perhaps, be absolved from many offences of which they stood accused, yet it would be impossible for the most zealous advocate who should attempt a vindication of their conduct, to affirm that they had not laboured to enslave the human mind with the fetters of a spiritual despotism, or to prove that religion in their hands had not partially relapsed into those errors and superstitions, the perfect eradication of which it had ever been the great aim and purpose of the Reformation to accomplish.

If the King and Laud had remained satisfied to confine their exertions to the reform of ecclesiastical affairs in England, they might have succeeded in all their designs, and preserved their authority unimpaired ; but in attempting to bring a Church founded upon such widely different principles as that of Scotland to a conformity with the Anglican Establishment, they roused a spirit of opposition in that turbulent nation, which no concessions, however large, could subsequently mitigate or appease. King James, as we have already mentioned, had framed the rude outlines of an

episcopal order in Scotland before he inherited the English throne, but being well acquainted with the predilection which the Scottish people entertained for a church government established upon the Presbyterian principle, he wisely refrained from making prelatical authority anything more than a shadow and a name. No one foresaw more clearly than did he, the evils which would surely follow, if the superintendence of the Church were entrusted to a man of such intractable temper and such arrogant disposition as Laud; hence, when petitioned by Lord Keeper Williams to favour his promotion, he replied coldly, "I find he hath a restless spirit, and cannot see when matters are well;" and upon another occasion he cautioned Prince Charles to beware of ever raising him to power. "Son," said James, "he hath a restless hede, and if ye let him e'er rise higher he'll ne'er ha' done till he has lost his own hede and endangered yours." A prophetic anticipation one day destined to be but too literally fulfilled.

The great opposition King Charles encountered from the refractory spirit of those Parliaments he assembled at Westminster, during the early part of his reign, induced him to seek other sources of support; and since the ecclesiastical body manifested upon all occasions such a deferential submission to his kingly authority, he soon arrived at the conclusion that the chief dignitaries of the church were the most proper persons to aid him in performing the functions of civil government. Regardless of his father's warning voice, he had not only advanced Laud to the highest office in the Church, but after the death of Buckingham relied

almost entirely upon this Prelate's advice with reference to state affairs. And, surely, never did Prince select a counsellor more unfitted for so arduous and responsible an office, than did King Charles in choosing Laud for an adviser; for with an appetite for power as insatiable as that of Becket, and with an ambition as aspiring as that of Wolsey, this disputatious churchman was the principal cause of many of the vicissitudes and calamities which brought this reign to such a fatal issue. The earnest and sincere piety Laud habitually practised, and the zealous solicitude he constantly evinced in promoting the welfare of the church and advancing the better observance of religious worship, soon earned for him the good opinions of the King, who came to entertain so deep a reverence for the bishop's character, that he imagined no favours or preferments Royal patronage could afford, too generous a reward or too rich a recompense. Nor was Laud altogether undeserving of this countenance; for however ill-adapted he might be to fulfil the office of directing the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of a large kingdom, it would be unjust to refuse him the praise of having uniformly observed a most scrupulous honesty in all official transactions, of having lent a munificent support to the encouragement of learning and education, and of having selected the most meritorious candidates for such preferments in the Church as lay under his personal controul. But the natural infirmities of his temper, and the weakness of his judgment eminently incapacitated him for the exalted position he was called to occupy, and urged him into

those violent courses of error which eventually proved fatal both to his patron and himself. In his opinions he was dogmatic, stubborn, and pertinacious, pursuing whatever he imagined to be right with invincible determination, and not even so much as listening to any arguments that men of riper judgment and larger wisdom might bring to his counsels. This temerity was not however long in producing evil fruits; and as it increased only the more when thwarted or opposed, its consequences soon became but too apparent. "He was," says Lord Clarendon, "a man of great courage and resolution, and being well assured within himself that he professed no end in all his actions and designs but what was pious and just, (as sure no man had ever a heart more entire to the King, the Church, or his country) he never studied the easiest way to those ends."

It was in the year 1633 King Charles visited Scotland, to be crowned King of that nation, and as eight years had elapsed since he inherited the throne from his father, this delay appeared not only improper but very uncourteous to his northern subjects. Laud, who had then already acquired a complete ascendancy in the royal council, was selected to attend the King in his progress to the north, and it was upon this occasion that they were first led to the contemplation of that comprehensive reform in the Scottish Church which ultimately proved so dangerous an undertaking. King Charles had always been zealously attached to the maintenance of an Episcopal order for the purposes of church government, and as the authority of Royalty

seemed also in some degree better fortified by the presence of such an institution, it became a cardinal maxim in his policy to increase by every possible means the influence and importance of the prelatical hierarchy. Naturally eager to seize every expedient which promised to assist in consolidating the outworks of royal prerogative, he saw in the elevation of bishops to high civil authority in secular affairs, a class of rulers who possessed by virtue of their sacerdotal office considerable controul over the clergy and the laity, but who were at the same time so perfectly dependent on the Crown, that no evil consequences could be apprehended from any pretensions they might set up. Laud, even more anxious than the King to witness the triumph of the prelatical order, willingly concurred in these views, and hence the restoration of Scottish Episcopacy in all the plenitude of its pristine magnificence and splendour suggested itself to their observation as one of the earliest steps to be taken in furtherance of their extensive design. Many obstacles sprang up to hinder the prosecution of this work, and impede its accomplishment—for the Scottish people were exceedingly averse to submit to Episcopal rule in ecclesiastical discipline, much less in secular affairs; besides, the estates required to reinvest prelatical authority with its original grandeur and pomp having passed to the hands of laymen, a restoration of church lands to the establishment must have proved a work almost impracticable, if ever so beneficial or desirable. Neither Laud nor the King were however to be deterred by any difficulties from attempting to carry out

their plans, and mistaking the silence which the Scottish nation preserved while intimidated by the presence of Royalty for an actual approval of their schemes, they knew no bounds of moderation in the various reforms and innovations they proposed.

The ceremony of the Coronation had no sooner commenced, than it became evident to those who assembled to witness its celebration that some very prejudicial changes were about to be enforced in the discipline of the Scottish Church. The gorgeous robes and embroidered canonicals worn by the officiating prelates, appeared to assimilate closely to the vestments of the Romish priesthood; while the manner in which the religious services of the ceremony were conducted almost bordered upon an imitation of the rituals prescribed by papal authority for similar occasions. The introduction of an altar, and of various forms resembling the celebration of mass, were viewed with great indignation by the assembled multitude; but what aggravated the ill feeling of the spectators in a ten-fold degree was an insult offered by Laud to one of the Scottish prelates who refused to be invested with the magnificent robe prepared for him. Observing the bishop about to take his allotted place, Laud, with insolent rudeness, thrust him away from the presence of the King, reproaching him with the taunt, "Are you a churchman and want the coat of your order?" A reproof so publicly administered to their bishop for adhering to the forms of the kirk, rankled in the hearts of those who beheld it, and construing the exclusion of the prelate into a censure passed upon their religion,

they watched only for an opportunity to revenge the insult. Indeed, the whole coronation service, and the mode of worship practised in the King's Chapel at Holyrood, were performed with a pomp and splendour very repugnant to the genius and temper of the Scottish people, and could not fail to give offence to a nation bred up in Calvinistic prejudices, and who consequently regarded plainness and simplicity as the chief essentials to be aimed at in all religious observances.

Before the King departed from the North, he directed at the suggestion of Laud several considerable alterations to be effected in the mode of conducting divine worship; and although the Parliament from feelings of loyalty and courtesy gave a constrained sanction to his proposals, it was evident that the time would soon arrive when these innovations would fail to be accepted by the nation at large. A statute authorising the King to regulate the vestments to be worn by the clergy, met with vehement opposition even in his presence, and it was only by resorting to the chicanery of falsifying the number of votes, that the assent of the assembly could be obtained. Although the Scottish people had consented under James to allow the nomination of titular bishops, the jurisdiction which this prelatial order enjoyed had been, in reality, always exceedingly limited. Independent of political motives and state interests, King Charles conscientiously believed that Episcopacy was absolutely necessary to maintain the discipline of the church, and in every feature of his policy it may be observed that he

stedfastly adhered to this principle. "It is most sure," said he, "that the purest primitive and best churches flourished under Episcopacy, and may so still if ignorance, superstition, avarice, and revenge, and other disorderly and disloyal passions, had not so blown up men's minds, that what they want of reasons or primitive patterns they supply with violence and oppression." Before quitting Edinburgh, the King founded an Episcopal see in that city, endowing it with church lands which some of the court nobles were privately bribed to surrender, in order to pave the way for a more general adoption of this example. Of the fourteen Scottish bishops, nine were admitted to the privy council of that kingdom, Laud being at the same time raised to this dignity. The office of Chancellor was conferred upon the Archbishop of St. Andrews, while that of High Treasurer was reserved for the Bishop of Ross. A court of High Commission in which the bishops largely predominated, was set up in Scotland, similar to that already established in England, and churchmen were most unseasonably placed in all the principal judicatories of the kingdom. This injudicious promotion of ecclesiastical dignitaries to all the chief offices of trust in the state, called forth the jealousy of the nobles, who regarded the enjoyment of such preferments almost as a privilege and birthright exclusively belonging to their order. But what rendered this innovation more intolerable to be borne than it otherwise would have been, was the arrogant and domineering pride shown by the clergy on many occasions to the secular orders, and if one

circumstance more than another served to alienate the affections of the nobles from their sovereign, it was the rude treatment they experienced from those haughty churchmen upon whom the rays of royal favour had so brightly shone.

As the King intended the Episcopal dignities should no longer remain merely titular, it became necessary to devise a source from whence a permanent income could be regularly derived. A measure was accordingly extorted from the Scottish Parliament compelling those persons who held the impropriated tithes and benefices, which had been alienated at the Reformation, to be surrendered again to the church at the expiration of their leases. In some instances, the resumption of these estates might be justified on the plea of procuring competent salaries for the impoverished clergy who occupied small cures, but the re-establishment of princely emoluments for the dignitaries of the Church, must be considered as a most impolitic step, since the greatest benefit in a political point of view that the Scottish Reformation produced, was the dispersion of those immense temporalities which the Catholic priesthood had previously enjoyed, to the serious obstruction of social civilisation. Lord Napier of Murchison, perhaps the ablest adherent of the Royalist cause in Scotland, spoke decidedly against entrusting ecclesiastics with political power. "To invest churchmen," said he, "with great estates, and the principal offices of the State, is neither convenient for the King, for the Church, nor for the State. Not for the Church, for the indiscreet zeal and excessive

donations of princes were the first causes of the corruption in the Romish Church, the taste whereof did so inflame the avarice and ambition of the successors, that they have raised themselves above all sovereign and secular power, and to maintain the same have obtended to the world certain devices of their own for matters of faith. Not to Kings, not to States, for historians witness what troubles have been raised to Kings, what tragedies among subjects, in all places where Churchmen were great. Our Reformed Churches, having reduced religion to the ancient truth and primitive simplicity, ought to beware that corruption enter not in their Church at the same gate which already is open with store of attendants thereat to welcome it with pomp and ceremony." The restoration of Episcopacy in Scotland might have been desirable for the better promotion of ecclesiastical discipline, but when it is remembered that the *vast majority* of the nation were strongly and conscientiously opposed to such an order being re-established in their Church, it would have been the wiser policy to have paid some respect to their prejudices, instead of compelling them by illegal means to accept an institution which they regarded with such aversion, and of which they spoke with such contempt. That prelacy was not vitally essential to the existence of the Scottish Church, subsequent history has fully demonstrated; and although we believe the King and his advisers were correct in esteeming the government of a church by bishops as incomparably superior to that parity in the ministry which Calvin recommended,

yet where so large a proportion of the people objected to Episcopacy, as was the case in Scotland at this period, their opinions and arguments deserved at least to be listened to and treated with consideration. The advancement of ecclesiastics to the principal offices of state, almost to the exclusion of the nobles, cannot be regarded in any other light than as one of those imprudent steps towards regal despotism which disfigure the conduct of King Charles at every part of his career; but even had their elevation been ever so much in harmony with the fabric of the constitution, or ever so much required by the political necessities of the times, the incompetence of churchmen to fulfil functions so utterly at variance with their sacred profession should have been a sufficient bar to their promotion, for it has been justly observed by one fully competent to give an opinion upon such matters, that clergymen understand the least and take the worst measure of human affairs of all mankind that can read or write.

The Parliaments of Scotland differed essentially from those of England both in their temper and constitution. Compliant, servile, and obsequious, they oftentimes misled Royalty by the patient submission with which they listened to the dictates and obeyed the commands of its ministers; for while showing a subservience exceeding even that displayed by the Parliaments of France, they professed to express the public opinion of, perhaps, the most turbulent and rebellious people in Europe. This striking anomaly had its origin in the presence of a committee in the

Legislature, termed the "Lords of the Articles," a body whose peculiar functions almost nullified the power of the Parliament, and reduced its sittings to the nature of mere empty and ceremonious forms. The method by which this committee was elected sufficiently explains how utterly inadequate the Parliament must have proved to serve as an index of popular feeling, or to have answered the purpose of a deliberative assembly. The "Lords of Articles" were thirty-two in number, the following being the manner in which they were elected. Eight bishops, entirely dependent on the Crown, first chose, in the usual manner, eight nobles, and the sixteen members thus elected then proceeded to select sixteen deputies from the barons and burgesses to represent the counties and towns. Thus, thirty-two individuals virtually constituted the whole legislature, since no subject could be proposed for the consideration of the Parliament, unless the "Lords of the Articles" had previously given their assent to its introduction; and as the members of this committee were merely the nominees of the Crown, it is evident, that the whole power of the Parliaments lay almost entirely at the disposal of Royalty and its ministers. When Parliament assembled, the three estates met in one house and voted together, but their business seldom extended to anything beyond granting a silent compliance to whatever measures the "Lords of the Articles" thought proper to propose for their consideration. It had been the policy of some monarchs to listen attentively to any remonstrances which fell from the members of these tribunals, in order that the "Lords

of the Articles" might be instructed by the royal council to alter or amend any particular measure which appeared unpopular, but King Charles disdained to practice such condescensions, imagining them to be a derogation of his kingly prerogative. Even he, however, upon some occasions, was compelled to obtain the sanction of Parliament, and to show how unscrupulously he employed coercion when the consent of this assembly was considered essential to the success of his designs, we may observe, that he not only falsified the number of the votes after they were recorded, but intimidated the members previously, by remarking from the throne, "Gentlemen, I have all your names here, and I will know this day who will do me service, and who will not." To Lord Rothes, who merely read a petition to him against Episcopacy, he replied, "No more of that my Lord, I will receive no such petition." Again, the impeachment of Lord Balmerino evidently arose from an adverse vote given in the Parliament, and, although the execution of the sentence was not pressed by the Crown, yet so deep was the resentment of the people, that Bishop Burnet had often heard his father remark, that the prosecution of this nobleman produced, in a great measure, the ruin of the King's affairs in Scotland.

Before quitting Scotland, after the coronation, his majesty had commissioned several of the bishops of that kingdom to draw up a collection of Canons for the purpose of enforcing a stricter discipline in the Kirk. In the spring of the year 1635, these Canons, having been previously examined and approved by

Laud, were presented to the King, who by virtue of his royal prerogative, commanded that they should be everywhere in Scotland, received, observed, and executed. The first, excommunicated all those who affirmed the power and prerogative of the King not to be equal to that of the Jewish Kings, that is absolute and unlimited. The second, excommunicated those who affirmed the Book of Common Prayer, or the Episcopal government of the Kirk to be corrupt, superstitious, or unlawful. The third, restrained ordinations to the *quatuor tempora*. The fifth, obliged all presbyters to read divine service according to the book of Scottish Common Prayer, and to conform to all the offices, parts, and rubrics of it. Farther, that no assembly of the clergy shall be called but by the King; that none shall receive the sacrament but upon their knees; that every ecclesiastic dying, without children, shall bequeath part of his estate to the church; that the clergy shall have no private meetings for expounding scripture; that no minister shall conceive prayer, but pray according to the prescribed forms; that no man shall teach school without a license from the bishops, nor pronounce any censures of the church without their approbation; finally, that no person shall be admitted to holy orders without subscribing to these Canons. Although some of the regulations enforced by these edicts were most essential to establish better discipline in the Kirk, yet many reasonable objections might be urged against them. First, it appeared exceedingly negligent, if not absurd, to enjoin the observance of a new Liturgy which was

neither published nor even so much as prepared. Secondly, the canon which decreed the king's power, as illimitable, not only annulled the authority of Parliaments, but established almost a Turkish despotism both in Church and State. Thirdly, the promulgation of a measure authorising such important changes in ecclesiastical affairs, without either the Parliament, the Lords of the Council, or any Assembly of the clergy, having been previously consulted respecting it, gave manifest and visible evidence that the reign of regal absolutism had already commenced. The publication of the Canons was however permitted to proceed without any serious or open resistance being offered, for the preponderating power which their kings had *apparently* obtained by succeeding to the English throne, intimidated the Scottish people, and induced them to hesitate before venturing to attack an adversary armed with such formidable weapons, and possessed of such inexhaustible resources, as an English sovereign was then supposed to have at his command. Although these suspicions of their own inferiority caused the Scots for a period to yield a sullen obedience to the harsh dictates of royal power, they silently brooded over feelings of inward discontent and alarm, for the dependence of their country upon England no longer appeared in the shape of a vague and distant apprehension, but as a dread and positive reality. The spiritual independence of the Kirk had always been considered by the Scottish nation as one of the most sacred and fundamental principles of their political constitution. Indelibly written upon their hearts, by

the perils they had encountered and the disasters they had suffered in endeavouring to establish it, they still remained firmly and inflexibly determined to maintain it; other interests they might willingly sacrifice, other privileges they might be disposed to yield, but this was a trust too holy to be lightly surrendered, and too precious to be negligently forfeited. Now the promulgation of Church Canons, which neither a Parliament, a Synod, nor an Assembly of the Clergy had previously sanctioned or inspected, was virtually a removal of the very landmarks of religious liberty, since it substituted the authority of the sovereign in the regulation of church discipline, for that self-government in ecclesiastical affairs which the Scotch nation had uninterruptedly enjoyed from the very dawn of the Reformation. In truth, the whole structure of presbytery was dissolved by the manner in which these Canons were imposed upon the Kirk, the general assemblies of the clergy being superseded in authority by the King and a few foreign bishops. The inroads which James I. had made in this direction were slight indeed when compared with those attempted by his son, who imagined himself empowered to destroy the spiritual independence of the Kirk, because from some peculiarities in the origin of the English Reformation, he enjoyed an almost despotic authority in the government of the Anglican Church. In such anticipations, however, King Charles was doomed to be sadly disappointed, for all classes in Scotland, of every rank and grade, from the proudest peer to the humblest vassal, were as ardently attached

as their ancestors had ever been in the days of Maitland and Knox. The accession of their sovereigns to the English throne, had at first been viewed by the Scots with feelings of unmixed pride and satisfaction, but when the progress of events showed how dearly this honour had been purchased, very different sentiments began to prevail. In asserting the right to exercise a supreme and uncontrollable authority over the Kirk, King Charles had wounded the pride of the Scottish people in its most sensitive part; while his persistence in attempting to retain this authority when it was clearly proved to be not only illegal but hateful to nine-tenths of the nation, shows how small was the amount of discernment he possessed, and how utterly unfit he was to be entrusted with discretionary power. The day however was fast approaching, when these dearly purchased usurpations were to be atoned for by the calamities and reverses of civil war. The Scottish people, though for a time dispirited, were not subdued; but looking back through ages to the proud and stirring memories of Bannockburn, they sternly resolved to hazard similar adventures rather than surrender their ancient liberties, for it seemed intolerable to reflect that a nation which all the energy and valour of the Plantagenets had once been scarcely able to subdue, should be fast ingloriously sinking to the humiliating condition of a tributary and dependent province.

The resistance to the Canons would probably have been much more considerable had not the principal leaders of the nobles and the clergy been aware that

the English government intended to introduce a new liturgy for the use of the Kirk, very similar in its composition to that employed in the Anglican Church; and since this latter innovation appealed much more directly and intelligibly to the minds of the common people than did the Canons, it was deemed politic by the chief dissentients to defer the expression of a decisive opposition till the liturgy should be published. An adherence to uniformity in the practice of religious worship had always appeared to the Scottish people a matter of perfect indifference, so that from negligence and inattention the services of the Kirk had become in the lapse of time so varied and dissimilar, that scarcely two adjoining parishes could be found in which the same forms of prayer were observed. To remedy an evil which seemed so inimical to the maintenance of discipline in the church, both Laud and the King concurred in deeming it desirable to substitute the English liturgy for those extemporary prayers which the Scottish clergy were in the habit of composing for the celebration of divine worship, but upon being informed that the prejudices of the people would probably run high against this proposal, they commissioned several of the Scottish bishops to compile a new liturgy, by making such alterations in the English service book as they considered advisable. The prelates selected for this task were the Bishops of Dumblain and Ross; and after the conclusion of their labours the work was to be forwarded to Archbishop Laud, and Wren the Bishop of Norwich, for correction. In obedience to these commands, the liturgy was subjected to a care-

ful revisal, several changes being effected to render it more suitable to the Kirk, and more intelligible to those for whom it was intended; thus, instead of the English version of Psalms, and of the Epistles and Gospels, a Scotch translation was inserted, and the instructions of the rubric were altered, so as to direct the people when to stand and when to sit or kneel. The word *presbyter* was inserted instead of *priest*, sundry lessons of the Apocrypha were added, and the water placed in the font for baptism was to be consecrated before that rite was performed. Such Catholic saints as had been retained in the English Calendar were to remain, and any new saints that might be approved of, to be added. It would, perhaps, have been a wiser policy to have omitted several of these alterations, but others, such as the benediction for departed saints, and those passages in the communion service which appeared to countenance the doctrine of the real presence, should certainly have been avoided. Beyond these defects, the new liturgy presented no serious assimilation to the errors or superstitions of the Romish faith, and an unprejudiced observer would probably have perceived but little difference in its substance from that used by the Anglican Church. Unquestionably, it was much to be desired that the Scottish people should accept the liturgy, for had such been the result, that indecent and irregular manner in which the services of the Kirk were usually performed would have been entirely obviated and rectified. The bishops, the chief dignitaries of the church, and the small fraction of the nobles

engaged in the service of the Crown, were favourably disposed to receive the new service, but the inferior clergy, and the great mass of the population, were far too deeply imbued with Calvinistic inclinations to yield a ready submission to its adoption. Those honours and preferments which a splendid hierarchical order constantly holds out to flatter the ambition and incite the emulation of a priesthood, had produced no effect in mitigating the hostility which the parochial clergy in Scotland entertained against the prelatical establishment; but on the contrary, perhaps, rather served to stimulate the zeal both of the pastors and their congregations, in uniting them to compass its destruction, for Prelacy, according to their views, was "the mother and daughter of Popery, having a skin and face as black as a blackamoor with perjury and defection." Accustomed to listen to the fiery denunciations and energetic exhortations of their spiritual teachers, and attached to that declamatory style of preaching, which is absurdly supposed to denote the gift of an immediate inspiration, the Scottish people regarded the mere reading of prayer as a vain and useless ceremony; hence, to those ministers who contented themselves with following the prescribed services of the Kirk, they applied the disrespectful appellation of "dumb-dogs," and scarcely condescended to acknowledge them as worthy either to instruct or admonish the elect. The spiritual pride and intolerance in which these fanatic zealots indulged was extreme indeed, for whoever ventured to differ with them upon points of faith, or modes of religious ceremony, was in danger of being

placed utterly beyond the pale of salvation. Some of them went so far as to assert that men living and dying Papists, were inevitably lost, and all the ability of the illustrious Chillingworth failed to convince them that the errors of conscientious men do not incur the divine displeasure. Learned, pious, and deservedly eminent as many of these ministers were, it is impossible not to lament the uncharitable feelings of bigotry, with which they contemplated all who refused to subscribe to their creed, or to practice the ascetic severity they thought proper to enjoin. Their followers were designated as the chosen of heaven, their adversaries were branded as children of the devil, and if the narrow views they held respecting the last judgment were to be accepted as correct, the number of mankind destined to escape eternal perdition would be limited indeed. To men puffed up with this self-sufficiency and arrogance of heart, anything in the shape of prelatical control must naturally have been hateful enough, and as the new liturgy if introduced would have placed them more closely under the inspection of the bishops than before, they determined to prevent its adoption by a most strenuous and uncompromising opposition. It is a common accusation against King Charles, and one which many historians have delighted to repeat, that he intended gradually to prepare for the restoration of the Romish faith by compelling the Scots to use this liturgy, but we firmly believe that from the day he dismissed the Queen's foreign attendants, to the hour in which he conferred with Juxon upon the scaffold, no serious desire to abjure the Protestant reli-

gion ever entered his mind. That he was to blame for attempting to impose a liturgy upon the Kirk without having previously summoned a Synod of the clergy, or a Parliament to sanction its reception, cannot be denied; yet the design of introducing this service book into Scotland is, perhaps, the most venial and pardonable of all the errors he committed, for it must be borne in mind that a purpose may be honestly conceived though its accomplishment be dishonestly promoted.

In the spring of the year 1637, the liturgy being complete, a notification was forwarded to the Privy Council in Scotland that the King desired the ministers of the Kirk to adopt the new form of worship, but the Archbishop of St. Andrews and Lord Traquaire perceiving the difficulties which would attend its introduction, thought proper to delay the publication till they had apprised his majesty of their apprehensions. Partly from a conscientious belief that the innovation was too essential to the welfare of the Kirk to be put aside by popular clamour, and partly from a dislike of having his regal authority called in question, the King persisted in commanding the council to proceed with their work. Accordingly, due notice having been given, it was publicly announced that on the 23rd of July, the liturgy would be performed in all the principal churches of Edinburgh. At the Grey Friars Church, the service proceeded with very considerable interruptions, but in St. Giles's, or the Cathedral as it was termed, a perfect tumult arose when the dean began to officiate. The congregation, which consisted

chiefly of women, raised such a clamour by clapping their hands and screaming, that after several efforts the dean found it useless to persist. The bishop of the diocese, who happened to be present, now ascended the pulpit, with a view to restore order and exhort the people to tranquility, but no sooner had he commenced to address the audience, than a stool was thrown at him, and the riot became worse than ever. "*A Pope, a Pope, Antichrist, stone him!*" was the cry that resounded from all parts of the building; stones and missiles of every description were hurled at the altar, and the painted windows of the sacred edifice, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the civil magistrates could protect the dean and bishop to a safe retreat from the scene of this scandalous outrage. In the evening the disturbances were again repeated, and so furious did the passions of the mob become, that one of the bishops narrowly escaped a violent death in retiring from the church. Active measures were now taken by the Privy Council. Every rioter was threatened with death. Public worship was suspended at all the churches in the city for a month. Assemblies of the people were forbidden by proclamation, and death without mercy was denounced against all who should speak disrespectfully of the bishops, or the civil magistrates. Such menaces, however, proved of no avail, for thousands of all ranks and denominations poured into Edinburgh to protest against the innovations made in their form of worship, and to concert plans for making an effectual resistance, should such a course become necessary. The bishops,

the superior clergy, and indeed all orders of men who wore the insignia of royal favour, were daily subjected to insult; and even those persons who merely abstained from signing the petitions against the liturgy, were held up to public contempt. Every day the daring of the populace augmented, and it soon became evident to those in authority that the depths of public feeling were too widely stirred to be easily assuaged.

When intelligence of these discreditable proceedings at Edinburgh first arrived in London, King Charles and his adviser Laud attributed them to "the rascal multitude," and affected to regard them as merely the momentary risings of an excited rabble; but when after the lapse of many weeks, the opposition to the liturgy continued as vigorous as ever, they could no longer fail to observe that the rioters were a party pressed into action, and supported by a large proportion of the clergy, the nobles, and the people. Three courses now lay open for the king to pursue—to resume the ancient form of worship, by recalling the new liturgy altogether—to summon an assembly of the Scottish clergy, and endeavour to obtain their acquiescence to the liturgy, by consenting to erase some of its most obnoxious particulars—or, thirdly, to defy the whole Scottish nation, by levying an English army and forcibly compelling the people to accept the liturgy. The last was chosen by King Charles, for a policy which savoured of concession, or descended to compromise, seldom found favour in his affections. Yet, surely, nothing could be more rash or futile than this design to coerce the Scots, by force of

arms, subsequent revelations having fully proved that at this conjuncture the royal treasury was at "dead low water-mark," and the majority of the English people far more disposed to support the Scots than to aid in repressing them. Lord Strafford, who can never be accused of showing a reluctance for martial enterprise, so clearly saw the danger his sovereign would incur by rashly commencing hostilities with the Scottish nation, that he laboured earnestly to dissuade him from proceeding farther in this perilous undertaking. "No better provided, I must advise a rash and sudden declaration of war," said he; but Charles, full of infatuated notions about the boundless prerogative of kings, and animated by a belief that royal authority would by divine aid ever prove victorious over all disloyal opposition, felt disinclined to listen to such suggestions, or to profit by such wise admonitions.

The English nation held widely conflicting opinions respecting their sovereign's dispute with his Scottish subjects. The Puritans naturally desired the triumph of their Calvinistic brethren; while the great party which formed the political opposition to the English Court, though, for the most part, profoundly indifferent to the polemic questions in dispute, beheld the progress of these troubles in the North with secret satisfaction, well knowing that when the standards of civil war should once be raised, the day for calling an English Parliament could not be far distant. But although the barger population of England, generally speaking, wished the Scottish people success in their rebellious proceedings, another powerful party, comprising with-

in its ranks the Episcopalian clergy, and many of the nobility and county families of England, remained ardently devoted to their sovereign's cause, and determined to defend his honour. Without exactly desiring that arbitrary form of monarchy he intended to establish, and perhaps sincerely lamenting many of those excesses into which he was driven by the intemperance of passion, they were, nevertheless, too sensitively attached to the Church of their belief not to feel indignant at the blasphemous and insulting manner in which the Scottish Calvinists had ridiculed her services and spoken of her tenets. Privileges and titles they might have been willing to resign, honours and distinctions they might have readily surrendered, but when the faith in which they had been educated was held up to contempt, when the teachers of that faith were assailed by the most indecent libels and branded with the most opprobrious epithets, when the very sanctuary of their religion was threatened with destruction, they saw that the hour had arrived when to hesitate would be criminal, when to remain silent would be dishonour. And to this feeling of veneration for the Church, to this stern and inflexible zeal for the faith which was taught in her temples, we must turn to seek the reason why the Manor Houses of England sent forth that chivalric soldiery whose courage, whose fortitude, and whose valour, the iron nerve of a Fairfax could hardly conquer, and the military genius of a Cromwell scarcely subdue. As the Crusaders of old went forth beneath the emblem of the cross, so did the Cavaliers of England gather round the banners of the

Church, and incidents of heroism and self-sacrifice as touching and sublime are recorded of the gallant men who perished on the fields of Naseby and Edgehill, as ever legendary minstrel sang of those mail-clad warriors who bit the dust before the gates of Ascalon, or fell beneath the glittering cimeters of the Infidel upon the plains of Palestine.

In spite of the menacing aspect which affairs had assumed in Scotland from the publication of the liturgy, the King obstinately persisted in refusing to retract his commands, or to offer the slightest concession to his disaffected subjects. Six months had elapsed since the first tumult occurred in St. Giles's Church, yet the antipathy with which the people viewed the service book rather increased than diminished. Charles now resolved to resort to more energetic means. Accordingly, in the spring of the year 1638, a royal proclamation was issued, offering a free pardon to all persons for past offences, but exhorting them to conform peaceably to the decrees of royal authority for the future. By this document the liturgy and canons were also confirmed anew, and all persons were forbidden either to assemble or petition against them, under penalty of treason. Upon the appearance of this manifesto in Edinburgh, the passions of the people were exasperated to a degree bordering on frenzy. A single impulse appeared to seize the whole community, and scarcely a week was allowed to pass before a most energetic protest against the royal decree was prepared, by a renewal of the Solemn League and Covenant of former times. Never had the capital been the theatre

of such a stirring scene. Four tables were erected, one for the nobles, one for the gentry, one for the burghers, and one for the clergy, the members of each unanimously renouncing the late innovations, and banding together for the defence of their Covenant. People of all ranks, grades, and conditions of life, hastened to subscribe their names to the sacred compact, and so universal was public feeling manifested in its favour, that scarcely one person in a hundred refused to sign its conditions. All past animosities were merged in oblivion, and even the Highlanders so far forgot their hereditary hatred of the Lowlanders as to confederate themselves with the insurgents in support of the Covenant. Before six weeks elapsed, all but a mere fraction of the Scottish people had entered into this solemn engagement, and sworn to defend the independence of the Kirk with the sword if necessary. In the oath required of those who affixed their names to this memorable bond, the Covenanters swore "to maintain the true religion, to resist all contrary innovations, errors, and corruptions, and to defend the King, his person, and authority, in the preservation of the religion, laws, and liberties of the kingdom." Subsequently, the petitioners demanded the abolition of the Court of High Commission, the repeal of the Canons and Liturgy, the extirpation of Episcopacy, and a restoration of Assemblies of the Clergy for the government of the Kirk.

Incensed at the rebellious attitude the Scots had assumed by signing this Covenant and asking such concessions, King Charles would have instantly ad-

vanced with an army to chastise them if such an instrument had been available. Wanting the means, however, to procure this powerful auxiliary which was so essential to the prosecution of his design, it was deemed prudent by the King and his advisers to procrastinate and temporise with the Scots in order to gain time. Negotiations were consequently opened at once with the Covenanters, though it was never intended by the English Court that these diplomatic proceedings should lead to any permanent settlement of the dispute in question, unless the King obtained terms entirely favourable to his own personal views. By thus artfully diverting the attention of the Scottish people while this insidious policy was in progress, the royal council hoped to prepare for the offensive, and when their plans should be fully ripe for execution, the Machiavellian mask was to be quietly thrown aside. Such purposes being kept steadily in view, the Marquis of Hamilton was dispatched to Edinburgh, as a commissioner on the part of royalty, to treat with the insurgents, receiving at the same time secret instructions to yield as little as possible, and to deceive with fair but unmeaning words. Intelligence of his approach having been published in the Scottish capital, it was deemed politic by the principal Covenanters to show some demonstration of their numbers upon his arrival; accordingly, twenty thousand marched out in procession to meet him, while seven hundred of the Presbyterian clergy, habited in the Genevan cloak, ascended an eminence by the roadside and sang a psalm as the cortege of the Marquis passed. After spending several months

in a series of fruitless negotiations and vexatious controversies, Hamilton, finding his temporising policy no longer available, repaired to London for farther instructions, where, after a short interview with the King, he received commands (September, 1638) to return to Edinburgh at once, and grant every demand the Covenanters required. At such liberal concessions the Scots were extremely surprised, but they were far too wary and circumspect not to suspect that some ulterior designs lay hidden beneath this specious and flattering exterior. Nor was their mistrust without foundation, for as soon as the Assembly of the Clergy was about to open, the following instructions were sent privately by the King to Hamilton to pursue. "And as for this general assembly, though I can expect no good from it, yet I hope you may hinder much of the ill; first, by putting divisions among them concerning the legality of their elections, and then by protestations against their tumultuous proceedings." Again, in another letter, "As for the opinions of the clergy to prorogue the Assembly, I utterly dislike them, wherefore, I command you hold your day; but if you can break them by proving nullities in their proceedings, why nothing better"—and elsewhere, "As concerning the explanation of their damnable covenant, I have no more power in Scotland than as a Duke of Venice, which I will rather die than suffer. Yet I command the giving ear to the explanation, or anything else to win time." Thus was the insincerity of the King visible in every phase of his career.

Upon Hamilton's second return to Edinburgh, in the autumn of 1638, a General Assembly free from the control of royal authority was appointed to meet in November, and a Parliament in the ensuing May. At the election of this Assembly some ancient forms which King James had set aside were revived ; for the laity, feeling apprehensive lest the clergy should be intimidated by the presence of the royal commissioner, wished to introduce, as was the former practice, several secular members into this ecclesiastical court, to support the clerical body with their counsel and advice. Hamilton not objecting to this innovation, each presbytery was ordered to send, according to the original plan, a lay commissioner besides its two ministers, and as each borough and university enjoyed the privilege of deputing a secular member, the laymen were almost as numerous in the assembly as the ecclesiastics. In fact, the convention bore a far greater resemblance to a Parliament than a Synod. At length, on the twenty-first of November, about three hundred members assembled at Glasgow as convened, and the usual forms of proving the legality of the elections having been attended to, the proceedings commenced. Without waiting to ascertain what course the Assembly would pursue, the bishops entered an energetic protest, denying its authority and declaring it illegal, but the members soon retaliated upon their adversaries, by deposing the whole episcopal bench, excommunicating all the dignitaries of the church, and putting the bishops upon their trial. It would be impossible to conceive any crime excepting murder of which the prelates were not ac-

cused, while to incense the multitude more deeply against them, the document, specifying their various offences, was ordered to be read in every church throughout the kingdom. At this conjuncture, Hamilton perceiving that the Covenanters were determined to carry everything their own way in the Assembly, declared the meeting illegally constituted, and commanded its immediate dissolution; but the members, instead of complying with his instructions, boldly asserted, that "No one can dissolve the General Assembly without its assent, least of all, before its business is concluded, and its grievances are redressed." The accession of the Earl of Argyle to the Covenanters, now farther increased the courage of the Assembly, and, since the nation at large appeared almost unanimously inclined to approve of the conduct which the majority of the members had pursued, but little apprehension was felt for any measures of revenge, which royalty might adopt to punish those who had been the principal promoters of this daring step. It no longer remained a secret to the confederates, that Charles was levying a body of troops under the direction of Strafford for the subjugation of Scotland, and as the knowledge of this circumstance happened to become public just at the period when the Assembly was dissolved by Hamilton, the feelings of the whole nation were exasperated to the highest degree. No alternative now appeared left to the Scots, except an appeal to arms. Accordingly, a Provisional Government was chosen, an army ordered to be raised, and Leslie, an officer of great experience, appointed to its command.

The rupture between the King and his Scottish subjects being now complete, both parties attempted to justify their proceedings and to vindicate their conduct, by making public declarations, of which the one issued by the Covenanters was by far the more temperate in tone and superior in argument. In either kingdom military preparations rapidly progressed—the royal army assembling at York, and that of the malcontents in the vicinity of the Scottish border. Feasting and carousing formed the chief occupation in the English camp, while among Leslie's troops so much time was expended upon preaching and prayer, that little attention could be paid to the improvement of discipline. This fanatical enthusiasm, heightened as it was in the minds of the Scottish soldiers, by the idea that they were summoned as patriots to protect their national independence, served to render them almost invincible, and taught them to regard the day of battle as a certain prelude to victory. The English forces, if we except a few of the nobles and gentry, shared none of these exalted sentiments, but appeared, on the contrary, little disposed to serve the cause in which they had enlisted. Though arrayed to the number of twenty thousand, it was evident they could not long be kept in the field, unless the King's resources received a considerable accession in the shape of treasure and munition. Thus, we find one courtier observing, "the King's coffers were never emptier than at this time; and to us that have the honour to be near about him, no way is yet known how he will find means either to maintain or to begin a war without the help of his

people." Another speaks with greater apprehension—"We are almost certain that it will come to a war, and that a defensive one, but how we shall defend ourselves without money is not under my cap." A voluntary contribution from the clergy, the nobles, and the Roman Catholics, however, furnished resources sufficient for the immediate wants of the royal army, and the King, deluding himself with the vain notion that his presence, or at most a single engagement, would serve to reduce the insurgents, took no farther steps to replenish his exchequer, or to prepare for those exigencies which might follow a reverse. Innumerable disputes distracted the royal councils, and it was not until the month of June (1639) that King Charles and his retinue had arrived at the scene of action on the Scottish border. Lord Holland was now despatched with 3,000 men to reconnoitre Leslie's position, but no sooner did the royal force approach the Scottish camp than he precipitately withdrew them, without firing a single shot. The whole adventure indeed bordered upon the ridiculous, for Holland having sent forward a trumpeter, the Scots inquired "who he was," and the man replying "Lord Holland's," they told him "he had better be gone," an opinion in which his Lordship appears to have perfectly coincided, for in less than twenty minutes the English troops had disappeared. The absurdity of thus sending forward a mere detachment to cope with the main body of the Covenanters force, became sufficiently apparent when this signal reverse had discouraged the English soldiers, and exposed them to the contempt of their opponents. Sir

Philip Warwick remarked of Holland "that he was fitter for a show than for a field;" an observation perfectly verified by the results of his generalship. Indeed, a more unskilful leader could scarcely have been selected, since it appears that he advanced into the midst of the Scottish encampment with cavalry alone, before either his artillery or infantry had arrived within distance to reinforce him.

Both the belligerent parties now seemed desirous to discontinue hostilities, and effect a pacification if possible—the Scots from their success in the field, and partly from some remnants of loyal feeling—the King, from a conviction that his forces were strikingly inferior, and from the fact that many of the nobles around him expressed a wish "the business might be brought to a fair treaty." Several conferences were accordingly held at Berwick, between the Covenant chiefs and a deputation from the royal camp, the King frequently attending in person to accelerate the proceedings, and after the lapse of a few days a contract to the following effect was concluded and signed. "The armies on both sides to be disbanded, the fortresses and military stores to be given up to the King, prisoners to be exchanged, property placed under sequestration to be restored, and all differences respecting the Church and State to be decided by a Synod and Parliament, which are to be summoned in August." "There are some here," said Suckling, "that have an opinion necessity, not good nature, produced this treaty;" an assertion difficult to disprove if we contrast the largeness of the King's concessions with his former

pretensions. In truth, Charles no longer possessed the sinews of war; he was, therefore, for the moment, submissive and conciliatory by compulsion.

It soon became manifest that this pacification was little else than an armed truce, for notwithstanding the care which had been bestowed in drawing up the various articles of agreement, the principal point in dispute still remained unsettled. Upon nothing had the Scots more sternly insisted than the abolition of Episcopacy in the Kirk; King Charles was equally resolved to maintain it, and as this was a point which neither party felt inclined to surrender, both continued secretly to increase their forces for a renewal of the conflict, though ostensibly professing to disband them. A circumstance now happened which gave public affairs in England a different complexion, by inducing the King to call a Parliament at Westminster. In the first crisis of the Scottish insurrection, the Covenanters had so strangely overrated the resources which an English sovereign could bring into the field, that they were led to apply to foreign governments for aid in support of their cause. Negotiations for this purpose had been commenced with Cardinal Richlieu, and when the diplomatic communication between the two countries received his assent, a letter, signed by the principal malcontents in Scotland, was transmitted to Louis XIII. soliciting a supply of money and troops. By some mischance, one of these documents having been intercepted, fell into the possession of the English government. It was at once produced in the royal council, and since neither the King nor his advisers

doubted for a moment but that such an appeal to a foreign prince came within the province of high treason, they imagined that if an English Parliament were called and apprised of this letter, the Commons would readily grant any sum of money which might be required for the subjugation of the Scots. The Court believing the Covenanters had now become fairly entangled in the net, thought by this proceeding to draw the strings upon them and prevent their escape. A letter which the King wrote to the Metropolitan of Scotland before the discovery of this treasonable correspondence with the French government had taken place, proves that he never intended the treaty of Berwick to be anything more than a mere temporary expedient to ward off the difficulties of the moment. "We may give way," says he, "for the present to that which will be prejudicial to the Church and to our own government; yet we shall not leave thinking a time how to remedy it." By the opportune divulgence of the intercourse which the Scots had maintained with Richlieu, this *time* was supposed to have arrived, while to take advantage of it now formed the chief employment of the King and his advisers. The principal leaders of the old Parliamentary opposition in England, still however ardently sympathised with the Scots, and fearing the late pacification, if permanent, would protract the reign of despotism, they entered into close correspondence with the Covenanters and redoubled their distrust. Hampden visited Scotland at this period, (Nov. 1639) and it was probably by his advice that the Scottish Parliaments resumed all their

former high pretensions, demanding the King to convoke them every three years and to grant them perfect freedom of debate. The Assembly of the Clergy also voted Episcopacy to be unlawful in Scotland, and denounced the liturgy and canons as Popish innovations. Military preparations were not overlooked, for though the Scottish soldiers were disbanded, means had been taken to reassemble them at a moment's notice if required. In this exigency Charles recalled Strafford from Ireland to ask his advice. "I have too much cause," said the King, "to desire your counsel and attendance for some time, which more than this I think not fit to express by letter. The Scots Covenant begins to spread too far." Immediately upon the Lord Deputy's arrival in London, special councils were held, and it was determined with the unanimous concurrence of all present, that the King should prorogue the Scottish Parliament for six months, and summon one in England for the ensuing April. Meanwhile Strafford was ordered to repair to Ireland and hold a Parliament in that kingdom for the purpose of raising fresh subsidies to renew the Scottish War.

From the commencement of the King's dispute with the Scots, that nation had always reproached him for receiving money and assistance from the English Catholics to wage war against his Protestant subjects. This charge had some foundation of truth, and could not be much palliated, but at the same time it became a very reasonable question for the King to ask his Calvinistic adversaries, how they who deemed the errors of Popery so deadly, and the religion of Papists

as such an abomination, could conscientiously accept aid from a Catholic Prince, and take counsel with a Romish Cardinal. It was a strange contradiction indeed to apply to Catholics to assist in extirpating the ritual of a Protestant Church, because it assimilated to Popery. So inconsistently will men act, when personal interests are at stake, and when vindictive feelings are to be gratified !

Upon the news becoming public, that the King had commanded a Parliament to assemble at Westminster, all classes of the community received the intelligence with feelings of gratification and pleasure. Those persons who were friendly to the King, rejoiced at the idea that his troubles were likely to issue in such a happy termination, those who held adverse opinions to the Court and looked with suspicion on its policy, were gratified in attaining what they had so long desired, and all parties hoped that his Majesty, instructed by experience and humbled by adversity, had now discovered that Parliaments formed an integral and indispensable part of the Constitution, and that a sovereign, by paying a due respect to the legitimate privileges of his subjects, would be far more likely to ingratiate their affections and acquire their esteem, than by attempting to establish an unnatural despotism at once alien to the spirit and obnoxious to the temper of a free people. The elections preparatory to this Parliament were conducted with a degree of moderation that could scarcely have been anticipated, considering the provocation which the Commons had received since their last dissolution. Many of the

former members were re-elected, particularly the chiefs of the opposition, and it was especially remarked, that the various constituencies showed much anxiety to select weighty and influential men as their representatives. The majority of the Lower House were more favourable to the cause of privilege than prerogative, as well as determined to have grievances redressed, yet regarding the Assembly as a whole, it would be difficult to have selected a body of men more temperate in their views, or better fitted for the important crisis they were called to encounter. Lord Clarendon has eulogised the moderation and discretion they displayed during their brief tenure of authority. "The House," says he, "was generally disposed to please the King and do him service, and it could never be hoped that more sober and dispassionate men would ever meet together in that place, or fewer who brought ill purposes with them."

On the 13th of April, 1640, the Short Parliament, as it has been designated, assembled. According to the instructions of the King, the correspondence between the Scots and the King of France was read to the Commons, and after the Lord Keeper had adduced a variety of arguments to justify his Majesty's conduct in the late disturbances with Scotland, he concluded by advising the House to grant an immediate supply. The Commons were, however, of a different opinion, and refused to listen to such demands until their grievances had been fairly heard and redressed, experience having taught them that after the money-bills were once voted, the voice of the Lower House was

but little heeded. Incensed at what he considered the refractory conduct of the members in refusing to comply with his demands, the King now made a final proposition to abandon Ship-Money for ever, if they would grant him twelve subsidies. To this compromise, the opposition wisely refused to accede, knowing that such a promise, however solemnly it might be made, would be no guarantee for the future, and well remembering that the Petition of Right had been repeatedly violated, although five subsidies were expressly voted, on the faith that the obligations contained in that memorable instrument should be held sacred and inviolable. If the Commons had assented to this proposal, the very name of Parliaments must have become a mockery; for surely it were better that Parliaments should altogether cease than that their functions should be prostituted to form a disguise for absolute power. Besides, it appeared a strange logic to require them every session to purchase privileges which were already their own by prescriptive and indisputable right. The Lords had previously interposed at the instigation of the King, and by a formal vote in their own Chamber, declared that subsidies ought to be granted before grievances were taken into consideration. At this arrogant and unconstitutional infraction of their privileges the Commons were highly indignant. They stated that it was their undoubted right to grant supplies when and in what manner they chose; and that never, even under the Plantagenet or Tudor monarchs, had the Peers thought proper to invade this their immemorial and most cherished privilege. The result of

such an unwarrantable interference on the part of the Lords, retarded rather than advanced the progress of affairs; for the Commons voted it a high breach of their privileges, and proceeded at once to enquire into many of those irregularities which the executive had committed during eleven years of usurpation and misrule. The more moderate supporters of Charles foresaw the evils which would quickly ensue. It was generally reported the King was about to dissolve the Parliament. Hyde immediately hastened to Lambeth Palace, and having gained an interview with Laud, told him "that he came only to beseech him to use all his credit to prevent such a desperate counsel, which would produce great mischief to the King and to the Church," and assured him "that the House was as well constituted and disposed as ever House of Commons was or would be." Nothing, indeed, could well exceed the moderation displayed by the opposition, for they reprimanded one of their own members who thought proper to call Ship-Money an abomination; so reluctant were they to use offensive language in the assertion of their rights. Lord Coventry, who died shortly before this crisis, implored the King to take all distastes from the Parliament, and suffer it to sit without an unkind dissolution. Charles, however, saw too clearly the course which the Commons were firmly bent upon pursuing. Convinced that they would refuse his full demands, he was unwilling to receive half; and as he imagined if they sat long enough to grant the latter he should no longer possess an excuse for his illegal practices, he determined to obviate so undesirable an issue by an

immediate dissolution. An intimation from Herbert that the House was about to pass such a vote against Ship-Money as would blast that revenue and all other branches of the receipt, confirmed the King in his intention. "Parliaments," said Charles, "are like cats, they grow curst by age." Vane, the Secretary of State, was accordingly summoned to the royal Cabinet, and ordered forthwith to inform the House, that unless supplies were voted at once, exactly in compliance with the King's message, a dissolution would immediately ensue. The debate of the Commons upon this notification was adjourned by a large majority, and in the interval his majesty dissolved the Parliament.

The intelligence that so abrupt a termination had removed an Assembly to which all loyal and well-disposed men had looked forward with such high anticipations, was received by the nation with almost universal regret. Every one more or less foresaw the difficulties that must inevitably ensue from a step so indiscreetly taken, and although a few discerning statesmen rejoiced at the idea that a more vigorous and stern successor must ere long replace the defunct Parliament, yet the community at large grieved to contemplate the perilous position in which their sovereign had placed himself by this intemperate and ill-advised proceeding. About an hour after the House had broken up, Hyde met St. John, one of the principal leaders of the opposition, a man usually of an aspect so taciturn and melancholic that he was called "the dark lantern." Upon this occasion, however, St.

John seeing Hyde dejected, said to him with a smiling countenance, "What disturbs you?" "That which disturbs many honest men" replied Hyde; the imprudent dissolution of so sensible and moderate a Parliament, which in our present disorders was the only one likely to apply a remedy." "Ah!" rejoined St. John, "before things get better they must get worse; this Parliament would never have done what must be done before it will be merry in England." St. John was correct in his observation, for nothing we believe but the *might* of a Parliament would have made Charles pay respect to the *right* of a Parliament.

Lord Strafford has generally been accused of having advised this rash and impolitic dissolution, but as the whole council gave their assent to the measure when proposed, except the Earls of Northumberland and Holland, it is unjust to impute the error to him alone. We are inclined to attribute the principal blame to the King, since in all probability, if the truth could be known, the concurrence of the council was either gained by his sophistry, or extorted by his importunity. Scarcely had a day elapsed before he repented of his rashness, so much as to wish the Parliament could be reassembled; and well might he repent, "for the cup was now full, and this last drop had caused the waters of bitterness to overflow." The darkened troubles of the future revealed themselves in a thousand gloomy forebodings, and, full of remorse, he began to enquire if it were possible to retrace his steps. A council of the law officers of the crown summoned to ascertain if such a course were practicable, having replied in the

negative, nothing was left but to revert to prerogative, and resume all the former illegal expedients for raising money. Charles with his usual insincerity now attempted to cast the blame of dissolving the Parliament upon Vane, by pretending he had never given that minister instructions to adopt so violent a measure; but this mean and contemptible artifice deceived no one, since it was evident to every person of common sense, that the King fully intended the dissolution to take place, and that Vane had been the mere instrument of his will. But it was too often the unworthy practice of those days for sovereigns to screen their own faults by sacrificing the honour and blasting the reputation of their servants. Even Queen Elizabeth had stooped to this vile subterfuge, and dismissed her secrerary, Davison, to avoid the imputation of having consented to the execution of her captive kinswoman, the unhappy Mary Stuart.

It had always been the custom for Convocation to rise at the same time as the Parliament, but the King and Laud thinking the labours of this reverend assembly would materially contribute to the success of that despotism they desired to establish, a commission was issued after the dissolution of Parliament which authorised the members of Convocation to frame an ecclesiastical code adapted to the exigencies of the times, and to continue their session to an indefinite period. The only precedent that could be adduced to justify this unwarrantable innovation, was a single instance quoted from the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in which Convocation was protracted a few weeks after

the Commons had been dissolved. This example, unsubstantial as it was, served however as an authority amply sufficient for rulers so unscrupulous in their conduct as were the King and Laud, more particularly when the interests of royalty were supposed to be at stake. The violation of one usage usually necessitates the violation of others, and such was the case in this instance, for since Parliament was no longer in existence to legalise the proceedings of the Synod, it became requisite for the King to declare that all canons and orders agreed to by Convocation, required nothing but the royal sanction to render them available. In the commission stood a remarkable clause—"that nothing was to be concluded without the archbishop had been a party to the consultation," so that under the vigilant and anxious superintendence of the Primate, the Synod commenced its illegal career. Six subsidies of four shillings in the pound, to be levied from the clergy within three years, were voted to the service of the Crown. Reports were read assuring the King Sectarianism had so much decreased, that in many dioceses scarcely a single Nonconformist remained. Seventeen new canons, framed by Laud, next received the assent of the Assembly, with the exception of one, which required not only the clergy but even the laity to take an oath, to maintain the Church against all innovations either in doctrine or discipline. The great opposition manifested in all parts of the country, when the nature of this oath became known, compelled the King, upon more mature consideration, to erase it. Many strange regulations were contained in these

canons, several of them asserting regal despotism as the basis of all civil government ; thus, by one it was ordained that every clergyman should, four times in the year, instruct his parishioners in the divine right of kings, and the damnable sin of resistance ; while in another, which declared the divine right of bishops, there was an *et cetera* that might be perverted to any meaning the bishops might choose to put upon it. From the success which had apparently at first attended the proceedings of Convocation, the King flattered himself the nation would cease to trouble him about Parliaments, by accepting this Assembly as a substitute. The clergy having always proved exceedingly obsequious and compliant to his wishes, impressed him with the idea that no refractory opposition was likely to be expected from them ; and as the Synod bore a kind of outward resemblance to the Parliament, he imagined that he had at last thrown up a formidable rampart to defend his absolute power. But he was not destined to a long enjoyment of such consolatory thoughts, for the Convocation had sat but a very little while before it became necessary to guard their assemblies ~~by~~ a military force, in order to protect them from the fury of the multitude. Violent tumults were perpetually occurring. Upon one occasion two thousand of the infuriated sectaries rushed into the court, broke down the benches, shouting “ *No bishops, and no high commission !* ” Upon another, a mob of disorderly ruffians made such a desperate assault on Lambeth Palace, that Laud with difficulty effected a retreat to Whitehall for personal safety. The feeling

of the nation being evidently more favourable to the rioters than the government in these disturbances, it was deemed politic to dissolve the Convocation and resort to other measures.

To render the perils of this desperate crisis yet more alarming, intelligence arrived at Court that the Scottish insurgents were on the point of invading England. Vigorous measures now became the last resort. Fear and distrust prevailed in the royal council. The King himself trembled at the consequences to which his temerity had led. One energetic statesman alone stood undismayed, and ready to confront whatever dangers might approach. To his faltering and disheartened colleagues he appeared to speak the language Milton puts into the mouth of Satan—

“ Meanwhile revive ;
Abandon fear ; to strength and counsel joined,
Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired.”

To Strafford the fortunes of royalty were now entrusted, and if the eloquence, valour, or determination of a single mind could have retrieved the day, Charles might yet have counted upon ultimate success. It has been truly observed, that perverted patriots make the worst of tyrants, and of this Strafford proved a memorable example. Sprung from an illustrious family, and pre-eminent even in youth for his conspicuous talents, he attained a conspicuous position in public life almost before he had reached the age of manhood. One of the most distinguished members of the Lower House, he soon obtained the confidence of that assembly. Twice during the early Parliaments of

King Charles, he was chosen to represent Yorkshire as the champion of those popular principles, which in after life he strenuously laboured to proscribe, and so sensibly did the Court feel the power of his eloquence at this period, that he was one of the six members selected to serve the office of sheriff, for the express purpose of excluding them from the arena of Parliament. Resenting this stretch of arbitrary power, Strafford refused to contribute his proportion to a forced loan which the government had illegally demanded, and having suffered imprisonment for his contumacy, he re-entered Parliament with a full determination to expose the wrongs and indignities to which he had been subjected. He now became the colleague of Hampden, Pym, and Eliot, and was regarded as one of the leading patriots of the Lower House. Whether in his opposition to the Court he acted purely from an honest zeal to vindicate the liberties of his countrymen, or whether he professed an outward patriotism merely as a cloak to gratify his animosity against Buckingham, remains uncertain, but whatever might be the motives which actuated his conduct, he was unquestionably foremost among the ranks of those who were bent upon making royalty pay a due respect to the privileges of the people, by compelling it to recognise the ancient and fundamental statutes of the realm. Upon more than one occasion, he spoke a language worthy to have fallen from a patriot's lip in any age. In defending the Petition of Right, he stood manfully forward as the bold and unflinching advocate of freedom's cause. "Our laws,"

said he, "are not acquainted with sovereign power. We desire no new thing, nor do we offer to trench upon his majesty's prerogative, but we may not recede from this petition either in whole or in part." At another time he expressed himself yet more strongly against the unlawful exercise of royal prerogative. "We must vindicate—what?—new things? no! our ancient, legal, and vital liberties, by reinforcing the laws enacted by our ancestors, *by setting such a stamp upon them that no licentious spirit shall henceforth dare invade them.*" On the day that Parliament acceded to the Petition of Right, Strafford attained the climax of his glory as a patriot, for it was eminently owing to the fiery and intrepid eloquence in which he denounced the tyrannies inflicted by arbitrary power, that the King and the House of Lords had been compelled to yield their assent to that important measure. Through his conduct at this memorable crisis, he had attained an enviable position. He was honoured by his friends, respected by his opponents, and feared by the Court, and if he had possessed sufficient rectitude of principle to adhere to the honest convictions of his mind, many calamities that subsequently happened might have been averted, or at least, lessened in extent. He was, however, a man of haughty disposition, of implacable temper, and of a nature that could ill brook to submit to the superiority of others, while to render these infirmities yet more pernicious, his desires were passionately inflamed by a most inordinate love of power. Endowed with an understanding remarkable for the clearness and depth of its

capacity, and gifted with a ready eloquence alike distinguished for its terseness, its brilliancy, and its force, energetic in counsel and impetuous in debate, skilful in preparation and bold in action, he brought to the consideration of public affairs, such a combination of the qualities essential to a statesman, that his ability could neither be questioned or overlooked. "He wanted not," says Mrs. Hutchinson, "any accomplishment that could be desired in the most serviceable minister of state." From the vigorous and animated manner of his expression, he gained perhaps a greater degree of credit for learning than he was entitled to, although his parts were by no means contemptible or unadorned. Pride, the predominant passion of his nature, however, fostered that dangerous ambition which slowly worked his ruin, and procured his downfall. To ascend, to aspire, to rule, to hold dominion over others, were desires invariably present to his mind, and so insatiable did his thirst for power become, that to attain his object, he would, without scruple, desert the path of honour, and renounce his most earnest convictions. This fatal defect in his character marred all those talents with which nature had endowed him, splendid though they were, and left him without that patient and enduring fortitude so necessary to those who undertake to defend the cause of truth from the assaults of prejudice, and the malice of faction. He had not the moral courage to encounter

"the rough brake

That virtue must pass through,"

nor that stern and inflexible fidelity to principle, which

renders a man superior to the seductions of personal interest, and proof against the temptations of power. In an evil hour, the Court, aware of his infirmity, tempted him with the spoils of office. He accepted the offer, abandoned his party, and passed at once from the ranks of freedom into the service of despotism. The death of Buckingham hastened his elevation, for the King, left without a counsellor by the death of this obnoxious minister, was compelled to seek new advisers. Strafford saw the prize of power placed fairly within his reach. The occasion invited, he embraced it. And now he commenced that celebrated but guilty career, which, though for a period successful, ultimately conducted him to an ignominious death upon the scaffold. His principles he had sacrificed for power, his friends he had cast aside for the base consideration of personal rank. A renegade and an apostate, he readily adopted those very views he had in better days been forward to denounce. It is idle to extenuate his conduct by saying that the King took him as the leader of the most powerful party in the Commons. It was not so. He took him as the hireling, who was ready to prostitute his abilities for personal interest, and to barter away his country's liberty for personal aggrandisement. Strafford went over to the Court—the Court did not go over to him. His defection from the opposition arose from mean, selfish, and sordid motives. He knew the terms upon which he had been purchased. He knew the conditions of the contract. He knew the service for which he was engaged. The plea of imbecility or of weak judgment

cannot be brought forward to palliate his conduct, nor could the violence of his former associates be adduced to account for his desertion. Like the mercenary soldier of war, he went over to fight the battle of the enemy, only because the wage was higher, and the reward more sure.

In temper, capacity, and resolution, Strafford was well calculated to carry out the rash designs entertained by his royal master, and having once fairly abandoned his former principles, he entered the service of despotism with a willing heart. No compunctions of remorse followed his apostacy—no murmurs of conscience left him in hesitation or doubt. That expressive word *Thorough*, which so frequently occurs in his correspondence, sufficiently indicates the course he intended to pursue. The establishment of absolute royalty, the conversion of Parliaments into mere subservient vassals of sovereign power, the evasion of trial by jury in the courts of justice, and the levy of taxation for the purposes of government by means of a standing army, were among the preliminary essentials he contemplated as necessary for the success of that despotism he meant to substitute in lieu of the ancient constitution of the realm. To these views the King willingly acceded, and Strafford became duly installed in the place left vacant by the death of Buckingham. Titles, honours, and employments of trust, were bestowed upon him with a lavish hand. Successively he was made President of the Council of the North, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and, finally, Earl of Strafford. In administering these important offices, opportunities were

offered for a full display of his tyrannical nature. While presiding over the Northern Council, he so enlarged the jurisdiction of this Court, as to make it a tribunal more arbitrary and exacting in its proceedings than even the Star-Chamber or the Court of High Commission. In Ireland the history of his career forms one dark catalogue of oppression and crime. In assuming the government of this kingdom, he discovered a splendid occasion for putting into practice those theories of despotism so congenial to his imperious spirit. He governed by the sword—he imposed taxes without consent of Parliament—he established monopolies—he levied armies by force—he subverted the courts of justice, by substituting the authority of the executive for that of the judges. Nothing was left undone that could enhance the success or enlarge the powers of royal prerogative, and it was no vain and empty boast when he declared “the King is as absolute here as any prince in the world can be.” Not satisfied with exercising sovereign power over masses of the people, he carried his malevolence so far as to persecute isolated individuals, and during his tenure of authority some of the darkest instances of oppression are cited against him that ever stained the robe of justice. In Yorkshire, he caused Sir David Foulis to be fined £5,000 for omitting to pay him some trifling mark of respect. In Ireland his hard usage of Lord Clanricarde hastened that nobleman’s death, while for some insignificant affront he ordered Lord Mountmorris to be tried by court martial, and used illegal influence in persuading the officers present to record a capital

sentence against him. The object of this intrigue against Mountmorris was to obtain the disposal of the various offices which would become vacant by his displacement. An outrage upon Lord Chancellor Loftus formed the crowning act of Strafford's maladministration. This nobleman refusing to make such a settlement upon his son's marriage as the Lord Deputy desired, was cast into prison, and it was only by making an ample apology that his liberty could be regained. To aggravate the offence and increase its criminality, Strafford is supposed to have maintained an improper intercourse with the Chancellor's daughter, Lady Gifford, on whose behalf this irregular interference of the executive was effected. Well, indeed, might Pym call him 'the wicked Earl.' The character of Strafford, whether we regard him in public or in private life, is alike detestable and repulsive. He can boast but few of those household virtues or domestic affections which sometimes serve to half redeem the errors of a statesman, by softening the harshness of contemporaries and enlisting the sympathies of posterity. The dauntless courage, the unswerving resolution, the impetuous eloquence, which distinguished him in the day of triumph, and the magnanimous fortitude he evinced when confronting the perils of adversity, must ever save his name from becoming a byword of obloquy or contempt; but his guilt, if we mistake not, is written upon the page of history, in colours far too vivid and enduring even for his most ardent admirers to set up his conduct as a model to be imitated, or to mention his memory as an example worthy to be held

in veneration and respect. It is impossible to observe his conversion from the strenuous patriot to the stern and atrocious tyrant without feeling that he was like the fallen Angel—

“not the same

As when in heaven he stood upright and pure.”

After the dissolution of the Short Parliament, the direction of the executive was wholly confided to Strafford, who, by the promptitude and decision he evinced in taking various measures of defence soon gained the entire confidence of the King and his advisers. To maintain a powerful standing army had always been the cardinal point to which Strafford's policy turned, from the day on which he sold himself to the Court, and in the government of Ireland he had invariably acted on this maxim as his correspondence abundantly proves. Thus, in one of his letters, he remarks: “this piece, well fortified, for ever vindicates the monarchy at home from under the conditions and restraints of subjects.” As Richlieu surrounded by the body-guards of Louis XIII. overawed the Parliaments and dispensed with the States General of France, so Strafford intended to reduce the English Parliaments to submission by a similar instrument. All that he required for the success of his design was the first levy of troops and the first victory, for as he observes to Charles, “the debts of the Crown being once taken off, *you may govern as you please.*” The Scottish nation continuing to engage in warlike preparations contrary to their stipulations at the Treaty of Berwick, the King was furnished with an admirable pretext for

the levy of a large military force, and having published by Strafford's advice, a declaration justifying his dissolution of the English Parliament, he commanded an army to be raised forthwith. The Scots once fairly subjugated, this weapon was intended to be used much nearer home, and had such a result occurred, the day of deliverance from regal despotism, would probably have been delayed in England for many generations, more especially if the soldiery had become popular by taking a successful part in the religious war then pending in Germany, or if they had advanced the cause of Protestantism in Holland by supporting the States General of that Republic in their resistance to the Spanish Monarchy. Fortunately for the liberties of the English people the policy of King Charles took a different direction, for if he had placed himself at the head of the Protestant Princes of Europe, and opposed the pretensions of Spain instead of making war with the Scots, it is difficult to say what would have been the fate of English Parliaments, or how long the English people must have consented to contribute Ship-Money and other extortionate imposts without a murmur.

At the first outbreak of the Scottish insurrection in 1638, Strafford had shown great reluctance to advise the employment of a military force against that nation, but he now (May, 1640) strongly urged upon the King the necessity of advancing with all the strength he could command, to undertake their immediate conquest. "I despair," says he in one of his letters, "of reducing that froward generation to reason and mode-

ration till punishments be well and roundly applied." As the chief difficulty of the enterprise lay in procuring the necessary supply of money for its conduct, an ingenious sophism began to prevail at Court, that the King having tried a Parliament and found it fail, was perfectly justified in resorting to those questionable expedients for raising subsidies in which he took such peculiar delight. The legists of the royal council gravely argued, that Parliament having refused to grant the supply demanded by the King, his Majesty was by such an act quite absolved from all the ordinary rules of government, and at liberty to take whatever his prerogative could obtain, but these sages unfortunately overlooked the fact that this maxim was open to another construction, for by the same reasoning that the King could assert he was absolved from all rules of government, the people could say also that they were absolved from all rules of obedience. The royal treasury was not to be replenished by such logic as this.

Strafford, however, resorted to forcible and effective measures, instead of wasting his time upon attempting to explain their legality or to procure precedents. From the Irish Parliament he had already obtained four subsidies, and a promise of 8,000 soldiers, while from the English Catholics he contrived to draw large sums of money by dispensing with the penal laws that aggrieved them. He next advised a voluntary loan to be collected, and personally subscribed £20,000, with the hope that so liberal an example would be largely imitated. From this source £300,000 passed into the

King's hands, the principal part being contributed by the nobility and the clergy; but this sum not being considered sufficient for the enterprise in contemplation, other means were employed for increasing the amount. Besides, the King did not wish it to appear that he had relaxed his former claims or relinquished any part of his prerogative, in consequence of what had happened in the Parliament so recently dissolved. Hence Ship-Money was levied more harshly than ever, the sheriffs even being imprisoned where they showed any remissness in its collection. Soldiers were enlisted by force. Coat and conduct-money was demanded for the equipment of the royal army, each county being required to furnish horses and provisions for the transport and maintenance of the troops. These plans failing to a great extent, from the universal opposition they provoked, Strafford urged the King to adopt harsher measures. Some gentlemen in Yorkshire refusing to comply with the royal demands, it was proposed in the council to prosecute them for such a dereliction of duty, "but," said Strafford, "the only way with my gentlemen is to send for them up and lay them by the heels." It is reported that he declared nothing would be done in the City of London till half the Aldermen were hanged, a threat probably jocular, though four of these functionaries were actually imprisoned for refusing to furnish a list of merchants capable of contributing to the loan of two millions which Charles required the Lord Mayor to collect. Another scandalous violation of faith the government practised, was to seize the treasure which the Spanish

merchants had placed in the Tower for security, and apply it to the King's service, upon the pretext of defending their persons from the Scots. Having reduced the deposit from £160,000 to £40,000, it was proposed to replace it by debasing the coinage with an equal alloy of copper, but the protests against this measure were so numerous and decisive, that the ministers thought proper to abandon their scheme. The King's interference with the private affairs of the East India Company was an outrage equally violent, for Cottington, the Secretary of State, entering the hall of the Merchants just when they were engaged in selling a quantity of pepper for 700,000 francs, told them it was already sequestrated to the King upon those terms. The merchants remonstrated with the Secretary, observing that all the persons interested in the sale of the pepper were not present, but Cottington merely replied, that instead of the King being indebted to them for the pepper, they were under an obligation to him for using it to defend their property and lives from the Scots. The merchants, however, felt much more alarm about their pepper than the Scots, these loans being in the end, generally synonymous with gifts. The pepper was of course immediately sold below the purchase price, and the proceeds transferred to his Majesty's exchequer. After receiving such treatment from the Government, it is not surprising that the Corporation of London should have been refractory, yet Cottington in writing to the King dilates upon their obstinacy. "The Mayor," says he, "is such a beast, and the Aldermen his brethren such

cattle, they will neither be driven nor go for themselves."

While the government was thus zealously engaged in extorting money from the people, the King without scruple violated the personal liberty of his subjects by the most arbitrary and illegal proceedings. When dissolving the Short Parliament, Charles had taken occasion in his address to the Lords to dilate in magniloquent language upon the care with which he should continue to watch over the interests of the nation, and protect the public liberty, remarking, at the conclusion of his speech, with especial emphasis—"As for the liberty of the people, that they now so much startle at, know, my lords, that no king in the world shall be more careful in the propriety of their goods, liberty of their persons, and true religion, than I shall." It might be supposed, that promises uttered with so much solemnity would have been religiously observed, yet scarcely had the Houses dissolved, before several members of the Commons were apprehended by the royal command, and cast into prison upon charges of the most groundless and frivolous nature. Sir Henry Bellasis and Sir John Hotham were summoned before the council, and interrogated by the King respecting their conduct in Parliament. Refusing to reply or to make any apology for their speeches in the House, they were forthwith imprisoned. The study and pockets of Lord Brook were searched, merely because a vague rumour obtained circulation, that he had been carrying on a treasonable correspondence with the Scots. Mr. Crew also suffered impri-

sonment for withholding the petitions he had received during the session, as the chairman of a committee upon the subject of religious grievances. The people murmured, and surely not without reason, at these glaring infractions of privilege, more particularly when they remembered how much respect for liberty the King had professed to their representatives, only a few days previous to these scandalous proceedings. In the Courts of Justice, many similar illegalities were daily practised; thus, one of the rioters captured in the tumult at Lambeth Palace, was stretched upon the rack with circumstances of great cruelty, although, in the case of Felton, the murderer of the Duke of Buckingham, the Judges had distinctly declared, that the infliction of torture upon criminals was contrary to the laws of England, however heinous might be the crime committed.

The Council, dismayed at the general expression of public displeasure, which constantly came under their observation, now took precautionary measures to prevent the disturbances that were daily expected to occur. All the Deputy Lieutenants and Justices of the Peace received orders to return to their respective counties. Large garrisons of soldiers protected Newgate and the Tower. Boats were forbidden to cross the Thames after nine o'clock at night. The usual May games were prohibited, from a fear lest they might induce tumults among the artisans, while to prevent riots, each master was made responsible for the conduct of his apprentices and servants. Persons detected in using the slightest language of disrespect when refer-

ring to royalty or its ministers, were apprehended and brought to trial, as though they had actually committed treason. To such extremities did the executive proceed in this system of espionage, that a few law students, who, in a convivial moment, had drank "Confusion to the Archbishop," were cited before the council to answer for their conduct. Lord Dorset, seeing the folly of pressing the accusation, observed with some tact, "that the students were drinking confusion to the Archbishop's *foes*, but the waiter leaving the room at the moment, had probably not heard the concluding word of the toast." This happy suggestion exonerated the students, who escaped with an admonition to be more cautious for the future. Laud was the principal person who instigated the council to enter into these ridiculous proceedings, no personal annoyance being too trifling or insignificant to escape his notice. Thus, he had even contrived to get Archy, the King's fool dismissed with his coat drawn over his head, because the jester asked him whether the stool flung at the bishop's head, in Edinburgh, was not the 'stool of repentance.' With such trifles were the ministers of state occupied, upon the very eve of civil warfare and rebellion.

By dint of the various expedients to which the royal council had resorted, a sufficient amount of treasure had been collected to enable the King to raise a considerable army, and about the middle of the month of July, (1640) this force, amounting to 19,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, received orders to march northward for the purpose of encountering the Scots whose

advance into England was now daily anticipated. Although in point of number such an array might have appeared to the Covenanters formidable enough, it soon became evident by the various royal proclamations issued to repress mutiny among the troops, that the soldiers were anything but heartily inclined to the cause they had sworn to defend. Nor were these feelings of dissatisfaction confined to the army alone, for so universally was public opinion expressed in favour of the Scots, that we find even the courtiers in the royal camp confessing it in their private correspondence. Thus, Lord Northumberland writing to a friend observes: "It is impossible things can long continue in the condition they are now in; so general a defection in this kingdom hath not been known in the memory of any." During the transport of the troops, several incidents happened which appeared to augur unfavourably of the enterprise. One company murdered their colonel because he was a Papist, in another the soldiers displayed shirts outside their uniform in derision of 'the bishop's war,' as they termed it, while a third absolutely refused to be shipped at Hull though their commander was present. Indeed, from Heylin's account, the conduct of the royal troops was such that they seemed far more likely to join the Scots than to appear in the field against them. "Many of the soldiers," says he, "were so unprincipled, or so ill-persuaded, that in their marchings through the country they broke into the churches, pulled up the rails, threw down communion tables, defaced the common prayer books, tore the surplices, and committed many other

acts of outrageous insolence." An army so insubordinate and disorganised as this, could offer but a sorry resistance to the well-disciplined array of the Covenanters' force, amongst whom feelings of enthusiasm for liberty rose almost to a degree of ardour verging upon frenzy.

While the troops which King Charles had assembled thus appeared to be in a state of open mutiny, and quite as dangerous to their own chiefs as to the enemy, the Scottish insurgents were carrying on their warlike preparations with wonderful alacrity and vigour. In the month of June, their Parliament assembled, as arranged at the previous prorogation, and continued to sit, although Traquair the royal commissioner desired an officer to enter the convention, and adjourn it to a future period by the King's command. The time had, however, passed for the members to be intimidated by injunctions from such a quarter, and as the royal assent was not necessary to legalise the acts of the Scottish legislature, they proceeded with the ordinary business of the government, enacting various laws for the redress of grievances as well as for the regulation of domestic affairs. After a short sitting, they concluded their session by imposing a tax to be especially levied for the farther prosecution of the war, transferring at the same time, the executive power to a Committee of Estates, under the denomination of a Provisional Government. This financial measure was, indeed, but little required, the general feeling of the nation according so entirely with the policy which the Covenanters had pursued, that the voluntary contributions offered by the people alone furnished a supply amply

sufficient to place an efficient army in the field. All classes appeared earnest to vie with each other in their exertions to support the cause of the Covenant against its enemies, and so completely did the Presbyterian clergy succeed in rousing the passions of the people to a state of fanatical enthusiasm, that nothing was needed but able leaders to turn these important materials to advantage. A remarkable unanimity prevailed among all ranks and orders of men, every one striving to the utmost of their personal ability to assist in preparing the army for the field. Recruits gathered round the standards of the Covenant in greater numbers than could be enlisted. Persons of wealth and station sent in their plate and valuables to furnish treasure. Ladies of quality worked clothes for the soldiers, and scarcely a family of consideration in Scotland, failed to send one of its representatives to defend those banners upon which were emblazoned in letters of gold, "For Christ's Crown and the Covenant." In the course of a few weeks, a tolerably well-disciplined army amounting to 23,000 infantry, and 3,000 cavalry, was thus assembled, and Leslie having been again called to the command, the forces were marched (July 20th) at once towards the Scottish border to take up a defensive position.

It had been the first intention of the Court to place Lord Northumberland at the head of the Royalist army, but this nobleman falling sick, the King himself professed to take the lead, Strafford being appointed Lieutenant General, and Lord Conway, an experienced officer, commander of the cavalry. The original design

of the King's military council had been to invade Scotland with 20,000 men from the English border, 10,000 arriving at the same time from Ireland, while Hamilton landing in the North was to pour down 10,000 more from the Highlands; but long before these plans were ripe for execution the Scottish forces had passed into Northumberland and necessitated the King to act on the defensive. On the 22nd of August, two days after this unlooked for event, Charles issued a declaration to the following effect: "The Scotch have rejected all clemency, have sought under religious pretexts to undermine the royal power, and hostilely attacked England. If, however, they confess their crimes and solicit pardon, it shall be granted them; otherwise every one who is guilty shall suffer the merited punishment of treason and sedition." It is usual to ascribe this advance of the Scots beyond the borders of their own territory, to a forged letter which the Covenanters had received from six of the principal malcontents in England, but whether this correspondence actually did take place or not, the Scots, it is certain, were in close communication with the chief opposition leaders of the English Parliament, and well assured of meeting with a favourable reception from the people at large. On the 27th of August, Leslie passed the Tweed, and encamped his troops on the heights of Heddon Law, which look down upon the plains of Newburn. A considerable detachment of the Royalist force, consisting of 10,000 foot and 2,000 horse, was stationed here under Lord Conway, but so little did this nobleman anticipate the enemy's advance, that

only a few days previously he had informed the King "that the Scots had not carried their preparations to such a degree as to be able to march this year." On discovering his mistake, by the actual approach of Leslie's force, Conway had no alternative left, but to attempt a repulse, for at the very moment Strafford forwarded a despatch, commanding him "to resolutely hold his ground, and be sure, whatever followed, to fight with the Scots upon their passage." Nothing but the river Tyne now separated the two armies, and although Conway's forces were far inferior in point of number, his instructions had been so decisive, that he felt himself bound to offer resistance, in case the Scots should attempt to cross the stream. Leslie was not long before he demanded a free and unmolested passage for the Covenanters, pretending that they were on the road to present a loyal address in person to their sovereign. Conway in obedience to the command of his superior officer, refused to accede. A skirmish quickly followed, but before scarcely sixty men had fallen, the English troops were seen scattered and flying in all directions, as if panic-struck by the first shots that were fired. Wilmot, the commander of the royalist cavalry, being taken prisoner by the Scots, the horse troopers wheeled round and effected a precipitate retreat, treading down their own infantry and artillery in the disorder of the moment. A general rout ensued, and so irregularly did the English force retire from the field, that order was scarce restored till they arrived at Newcastle. From this position, they fell back upon Durham, and from Durham upon

York. Leslie entered Newcastle in triumph, and before many days elapsed, the army of the Covenant occupied the four northern counties of England, having captured all the principal fortresses without obstacle. Never before or since did English soldiers leave the field of battle in such disgrace.

At such an instance of good fortune the Scots were remarkably elated, since if Conway had been enabled to hold his position on the Tyne a few weeks longer, Leslie must have inevitably commenced a retreat, so nearly was his stock of provisions exhausted. A command now appeared, signed by the principal Covenanters, forbidding the troops to pillage the country people, and promising to pay for any damage the soldiers might commit, as well as for all supplies they might require. Declarations were printed by the Scots to prove that they came not as invaders, but to defend religion and liberty, and that the attack had been commenced by their ill-advised monarch. They next forwarded respectful petitions to the King, requesting him to confirm their late acts of Parliament, to restore their ships and merchandise, to revoke his proclamation in which they were styled rebels, and finally, to summon an English Parliament to advise peace between the two kingdoms. A private interview with the King, for the purpose of attempting a new pacification, was also solicited by several of the leading Covenanters, who, from feelings of loyalty, went so far as to express regret for what had occurred at Newburn, and to apologise in terms of great humility, for the victory their countrymen had obtained.

How far the Scots were justified in invading England remains a debatable question. That a majority of the English people regarded them rather in the light of deliverers than aggressors cannot be disputed, and since the King could never have been induced to assemble a Parliament at Westminster until he was actually driven to adopt such a course by suffering defeat from an insurgent force, it is clear that if the Scots had remained at home he would have continued his despotic ways in England without intermission. To Hampden and the colleagues who acted with him, but a single alternative was left, unless they intended to relinquish opposition altogether, and despair of restoring constitutional government for the future. Either they must have raised an armed force in the name of the English Parliament for the purpose of extorting from the Crown, a recognition of their legal rights, or they must have invited the Scots into the English territory, and thus compelled the King to call a Parliament at Westminster. Hampden chose the latter policy, and we think he acted wisely, since both parties, the King and the Opposition, were likely to meet in the English Parliament with a better prospect of reconciling their previous differences if that assembly were summoned as the consequence of a victory obtained by the Scots, than if it were forcibly called into existence by the success of English malcontents on the field of battle. If the leaders of the Opposition were to blame for seeking aid from the Scots at this conjuncture, those who invited the Prince of Orange to bring a Dutch force to England in 1688, must have

been still more open to censure, yet we never heard any Englishman, who professed regard for constitutional liberty, or the maintenance of the Protestant religion, inveigh against the policy those illustrious men pursued in appealing to the States General of Holland for assistance, and soliciting the intervention of a Dutch Prince. An invasion, the advance of the Scots into England could scarcely be called, each nation speaking almost the same language, and owing allegiance to the same sovereign; but whether the Covenanters were right or wrong in crossing the Border, all parties must admit that their conduct upon English territory was marked by scrupulous honesty and particular moderation. Indeed, it would be difficult to point out in history the occupation of a country by a foreign army in which discipline was so well maintained or plunder so little practised. And the cause of this is clear, the Scots came to break down and chastise a tyrannical faction, not to menace the independence of England or to enslave its people.

Intelligence of the signal defeat which Lord Conway had sustained at Newburn reached the King at Northallerton, where he and Strafford, with the reserve of the royalist force, had recently arrived. Charles, upon hearing the fatal news, at once fell into a state of despondency and gloom, perceiving plainly that neither the officers or the soldiers of his army would fight against the Scots. Everything around too plainly indicated the distressed condition to which affairs were hastening. The treasury was empty, and no resources appeared left to replenish it. The army was mutinous,

and discouraged by the reverses it had suffered. The nation was full of discontent, and loudly clamouring for a Parliament. In vain did Strafford urge Conway "to put more life into his men if he could." The advice came too late, for every one saw the last stake had been thrown and lost. In this desperate crisis a privy council was summoned by the King, to consult as to what policy he should pursue. After a brief deliberation the committee of state advised him either to throw himself upon the generosity of an English Parliament, or to summon a Council of Peers to consult with him, "*de arduis regni*," but Strafford and Laud who possessed unlimited influence in the royal cabinet, fearing to encounter so searching an ordeal as a Parliament, implored him to adopt the latter design, as less likely to be attended with perilous consequences. It was urged upon the King by these ministers, that he could expect nothing but fresh humiliation from a new Parliament, and that as the Peers upon the last occasion of their sitting had shown a disposition to vote supplies, they would now, if assembled, probably accede to a similar demand. Some obstacles arose in finding a plea upon which this committee of the Peers could be assembled, since the two Houses, Lords and Commons, had been invariably summoned together ever since the latter were first called to take part in the deliberation of public affairs. Lord Keeper Finch, however, declaring that in cases of great national danger, arising from sudden invasions of a foreign enemy, the King was warranted in seeking the advice of such a council, Charles acted upon his authority, and issued

writs to the Peers demanding their attendance at York on the twenty-fifth of September, "to give a timely remedy to evils which could not admit a delay so long as must of necessity be allowed for the assembling of a Parliament."

Now it had been the immemorial practice of Parliament, almost from the period when the Third Estate was first invested with legislative authority, for all money-bills to originate in the Commons, the Lords not even enjoying the privilege of levying taxation, without the concurrence of the Lower House, so that if this unconstitutional expedient had been actually employed to raise subsidies, it would have clearly been a most illegal usurpation. When, however, any extraordinary measures were required for extorting money, the counsellors of King Charles generally contrived to find amongst the records of ancient times some example which served as a pretext for their arbitrary courses; thus, one minister referred to the councils held by the Norman kings with their feudal barons, while another adduced a single instance in the reign of Edward III., where that monarch had convened a council of Peers, and raised great sums of money without a Parliament; but such obsolete customs, obscured by the lapse of centuries, and taken from a period when the constitution was in a state of rudimentary formation, evidently bore no analogy to the innovation which the King and his advisers now held in contemplation. Even Clarendon admits that this Assembly of the Peers was a new invention never before heard of, or so old that it had not been practised in England

for some hundreds of years. Indeed, but few of the ministers were sanguine of success in the scheme, or able to give any valid reason for its adoption, most of them regarding it as a kind of last resource to save them from the vengeance of those Parliaments of which they stood so much in dread. Laud, in giving his opinion, thus confessed his doubts and fears: "The great council of the Lords to be called, but to be put to the King that we are at the wall, and that we are in the dark, and *have no grounds for such a council.*" Many reasons have been assigned to explain the cause which induced the King to summon this unconstitutional assembly, some historians excusing him by saying that it was only intended as preparatory to a Parliament, others, that it was resolved merely out of the trouble and agony of afflicted thoughts. We think the design was, however, far more probably embraced upon the same grounds as those upon which Convocation had been previously tried, and that if the English people had willingly acquiesced in acknowledging its legality, the Crown would have allowed the Commons to fall speedily to a desuetude similar to that which the States General had experienced in France. Nothing, in truth, did Charles and his advisers dread so much, as the mention of an English Parliament; hence, they naturally felt disposed to support any proposition, however unreasonable or chimerical it might seem, which promised to save them from the necessity of appearing in a tribunal, where they could neither expect to find favour or affection for the future, nor hope to escape punishment and reproof for the errors of the past.

Upon the new council being first suggested to the King, several circumstances induced him to augur success from its adoption. Thus, the people, it was hoped, would regard the convention as a satisfactory substitute for Parliament, and consent to contribute imposts readily when levied by the sanction of an authority so imposing as that of the Peers of England. The House of Lords, also, from the peculiarity of its constitution, seemed favourably inclined to the interests of royalty, the support of the spiritual peers being regarded as certain, while from the temporal peers, no refractory opposition was to be anticipated. In these views, however, the King was partly mistaken, for the Peers, though closely allied to the Crown by an apparent similarity of interests, were far from servile as a body, being for the most part decidedly averse to the experiment they were called upon to sanction. Indeed, from the moment they had been summoned, a majority of them, we believe, fully intended when the day of sitting should arrive, to propose the calling of a Parliament according to the ancient forms, clearly foreseeing that such a course was the only practicable remedy for the King to adopt. A century later, the Notables of France, in a similar crisis, advised the assemblage of the States General, although a hundred and seventy years had elapsed since Richlieu commanded their omission. Had this grand council of the Peers in England proceeded propitiously, without doubt King Charles intended it should usurp the functions of the whole legislature by entirely superseding the Commons; but the spirit of public liberty was far too

hotly roused for the people to pass under so degrading a yoke, or to submit tamely to such a daring aggression upon their ancient and most cherished rights.

No sooner was this expedient of assembling a grand council of Peers made public, than requisitions poured in from all parts of the kingdom, soliciting the King to summon a Parliament at Westminster. A petition to this effect, signed by 10,000 citizens, was forwarded from London, although the committee of state had made the most strenuous efforts for its suppression while in the course of signature. Similar demands appeared from almost every county, the language of some being more violent than others, but all referring to a Parliament as likely to prove the happiest solution of existing difficulties. Even many of the Peers themselves felt considerable hesitation in obeying the summons which called them to the proposed council,—thinking Parliament a more legal tribunal, as well as a more natural remedy, for the disorders of the time. Twelve noblemen, particularly distinguished for their prominent support of popular principles, drew up a petition to this effect, in which it was especially stated that they acted not for themselves alone, but for many of the nobility and most of the gentry in several parts of the kingdom. Indeed, so strongly and universally was public opinion expressed against any farther delay of a Parliament, that before the Peers actually assembled to enter upon the novel trust confided to their care, Charles had so far yielded as to issue writs of his own free will for the assemblage of a Parliament at Westminster, on the third of November. Accordingly,

upon the Grand Council being opened in September for the despatch of business, the King, instead of requesting the Peers to furnish him with supplies, frankly informed them that he had by the advice of the Queen resolved to call a Parliament, and had already issued writs for that purpose. Wishing however to make it appear that he had not been driven from the original purpose for which the Peers were professedly assembled, Charles pretended that he had summoned them to find the means of paying his army till parliamentary supplies should come in, and to ask their advice as to the answer he should give the rebels, and in what manner he should treat them; thus representing the time necessarily occupied in the election of the Commons, as a plea for his unusual and unprecedented departure from the ordinary practices of Parliament.

The King having now virtually abandoned the direction of the executive to the Peers, they proceeded to make such arrangements with the Scots as were required for the interval that must elapse before the new Parliament could possibly assemble. It was immediately decided that a commission of noblemen should enter into communication with a similar deputation on the part of the Scots, and sixteen peers being nominated, Ripon, a town in Yorkshire, was fixed upon as the place most convenient for the negotiation to be commenced. Before, however, the Scots would consent to enter upon the consideration of a treaty at all, they required the English Commissioners to guarantee that the subsistence of the Covenanters' army

should be furnished by the English government, until such times as Parliament could meet at Westminster, a point readily conceded by the English Peers, the Royalist party feeling themselves too powerless to raise any demur. This preliminary claim allowed, a cessation of hostilities was agreed to, and the sum of £850 a day voted for the support of the Scottish forces until November, at which period the commissioners were to adjourn to London and conclude the pacification. It was also determined that if the money were not regularly paid, the Scots might levy it from the four Northern Counties of England, which were ceded to them as securities till peace was concluded. In the mean time, as the King's exchequer contained no treasure to meet the immediate necessities of the Scottish army, the Peers despatched a deputation of four noblemen to the City of London, soliciting a loan of £200,000 from the merchants, its repayment being guaranteed upon the personal responsibility of the Council, in case Parliament, when assembled, should refuse to ratify their proceedings. To this urgent request the citizens willingly responded, and the Scots, well pleased with their bargain, continued to occupy the Northern Counties with their troops, receiving instalments of money from time to time according to the arrangements they had concluded.

Amidst such vicissitudes and adversities, the King and those ministers on whose counsel he had hitherto reposed confidence, sank into inactivity from despair. Strafford, though feeling himself conquered, alone retained sufficient self-possession to stand unawed, and

confront the perils of the hour. His haughty spirit spurned the idea of submitting to the terms, dictated by men whom he regarded as successful rebels. "Let the King" said he to Laud, "but speak the word, and I will make the Scots go hence faster than they came, I would answer for it on my life; but the instructions must come from another than from me." The imperious tone in which he addressed the soldiers, irritated them to such a degree as to incense them more against their own leaders than the enemy they were enlisted to oppose. Lord Wharton and another peer having ventured to present a petition to the King, requesting him to conclude a peace with the Scots, Strafford summoned them before a court-martial, and demanded that they should be shot at the head of the army, as abettors and encouragers of revolt. Before the court rose, Hamilton asked Strafford "if he were sure of the army," a home question to which the latter could make no reply. Even while the treaty was pending at Ripon, Strafford ordered a skirmish to be made against the Scots, and gained a slight advantage—a circumstance which rather prejudiced than proved of service to the King's affairs. Thus, desperate in the dire extremity to which his fortunes were reduced, he stood eager to rush headlong on the foe, fully conscious that for him nothing now remained but the chance of victory or the certainty of death.

On the 3rd of November, 1640, a day conspicuous even in the annals of the world, that illustrious assembly, known in history as the Long Parliament, commenced its memorable career. The Commons, irritated by the

wrougs they had suffered, and indignant at the neglect with which they had been treated, assumed a stern and determined attitude. They laid the axe to the very roots of regal absolutism. They took the whole power of the government into their own hands. They subjected the executive to the control and supervision of Parliament. They placed restraints upon the prerogatives of royalty. They vindicated and re-established the privileges of the people. They curbed the ambitious pretensions of the church. They eradicated corruption and abuse from the courts of law. They purified the administration of justice. They liberated the victims of arbitrary power, and struck off the fetters of servitude from the oppressed. Finally, they brought to the bar of trial those guilty agents of despotism, who for eleven years had laboured to abrogate the Constitution by establishing a tyranny as revolting as it was unnatural.

To the merits of those inflexible patriots who formed the leaders of this Assembly, posterity has at length done tardy justice ; errors they committed—excesses they sanctioned—authority they abused, yet when all the faults of their chequered conduct shall be closely scanned, when all the evil deeds of their administration shall be harshly written down against them, when the worst construction shall have been put upon their actions and intentions, a sufficient measure of virtue will still be left to place them high upon the list of English statesmen, conspicuous amidst the ranks of freemen, and pre-eminent even among the noblest, the wisest, and the greatest benefactors of the human race.

EDMUND WALLER.

THE English poets of the sixteenth century, though characterised by an exuberant richness of imagination, and great strength of thought, are, generally speaking, with the exception of Spenser, remarkably deficient in graceful construction and harmonious versification. The language had not then been sufficiently purified and chastened to admit of elegant composition, but proved so harsh and unpliant, even in the hands of the greatest masters of the divine art, that however much we may admire the vigour and originality of their ideas, the verse which expressed them sounds rough and displeasing to the ear. In the present day scarcely any work of these writers can be perfectly comprehended as to the exact meaning of many passages, without a glossary being constantly at hand, as well as the aid of some laborious and patient commentator to explain the text. It was not that these writers were wanting in genius or taste, but that the barbarisms of the age in which they lived formed insurmountable obstacles in preventing them from attaining a pure and correct style. The seventeenth century accomplished a perceptible improvement in the language, as regards chasteness and refinement of expression, so that before the Augustan age of English literature had closed, both verse and prose were written in a style so elegant and graceful, that the works then

produced have rarely in subsequent times been rivalled or surpassed. We know of no compositions in recent annals, which excel the *L'Allegro* and *Penseroso* of Milton, the *Essays* of Temple and Addison, the *Fables* of Dryden, and the *Epistles* of Pope, in reference to correctness of diction, variety of modulation, and perfection of harmony. As a conspicuous labourer among those who contributed to effect this reformation in the English language, the subject of the following memoir deserves honourable mention.

Edmund Waller was born at Coleshill in Hertfordshire, on the 3rd of May, 1605, his father occupying the position of a country gentleman, and possessing large estates in Buckinghamshire, as well as the enjoyment of a considerable fortune. The mother of the poet being a sister of the celebrated Hampden, this circumstance shaped in some degree the political conduct of her son, amidst the disastrous troubles which ensued.

Waller having had the misfortune while an infant to lose his father by a sudden illness, the patrimonial estate passed into his hands at a very early age; and as this inheritance produced an income of nearly four thousand pounds a year, his position naturally proved favourable and commanding for his entrance into public life. After receiving a rudimentary education at Eton, he was removed to King's College, Cambridge, and from thence, at the age of seventeen, he passed directly into the House of Commons as the member for Amersham, in Bucks, a borough adjoining his landed property, and probably in some degree

under the family influence as well. He represented this town in the third and fourth Parliaments of James the First, and it is recorded that soon after his admission to the House, he spoke upon several occasions with considerable fluency and vigour. One of his biographers, in mentioning the circumstance of Waller's appearance at the court of this monarch, has reported a remarkable conversation that occurred when the poet was present. Andrews, Bishop of Winchester, and Neale, Bishop of Durham, standing behind the King's chair, his majesty thus addressed them: "My Lords, cannot I take my subject's money when I want it, without all this formality of Parliament?" The Bishop of Durham answered, "God forbid but that you should, you are the breath of our nostrils." Whereupon the king turned round, and said to the Bishop of Winchester, "What say you."—"Sir," replied the Bishop, "I have no skill to judge of Parliamentary cases."—The King answered, "No put off, my Lord, answer me presently."—"Then, Sir," said he, "I think it is lawful for you to take my brother Neale's money, since he offers it."

No sooner had Waller taken his seat in Parliament, than he aspired to attract the observation of the court, by the publication of a poem, upon the escape of Prince Charles, at St. Andero; and so favourably were the verses received, that after this successful *debut* every one appears to have regarded him as entitled to assume the laurels of Parnassus, by an indisputable right. The versification of this fragment is exceedingly correct, and proves that the writer had

already acquired, or rather invented, that peculiar smoothness of his numbers, which has ever since formed his principal claim to poetic fame. Pope designated him as the predecessor of Dryden, in the art of giving melody to verse—

“ Britain to soft refinements less a foe,
Wit grew polite, and numbers learned to flow ;
Waller was smooth ; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine.”

In a conversation with Aubrey, Waller once observed that it was the idea of remedying the harshness of English poetry which first induced him to turn his attention to versification. “Methought,” said he, “when I was a brisk young sparke, I never saw a good copie of English verses, they wanted smoothnesse; so I began to essay; I could not versify always when I wished, but when the fitt came on I could do it easily.” The metrical harmony of Waller’s numbers does not appear to have improved by practice. His first pieces display as great a felicity of execution as his last, for as one of his biographers justly remarks, “Where we to judge only by the wording, we could not tell what he wrote at twenty, and what at fourscore.”

Waller, like many of his brother poets of the Caroline era, was not free from the cardinal vice of dragging mythological concerts into his verse, and comparing every hero, whose panegyric he undertook, with half-a-dozen celebrities of fiction, from the fabulous and mythic tales of the profane writers. Nothing can be more tame or feeble, than a succession of these extravagant and fantastical parallels, which so far from

giving a sublimity or elevation to the subject, generally produce quite the contrary effect. Cowley, Cleveland, Donne, Denham, and indeed all his contemporaries, are full of this affectation for classical allusion to the ancient world—a topic, which, when so repeatedly introduced, and so incessantly presented, degenerates into a pedantry of the most vulgar and offensive character. To speak of a soldier, without referring to Mars, or to praise a beauty, without resembling her to Venus, would have been impossible; indeed, language was not considered poetry, until studded with these mystic celebrities of the pagan philosophy, and groaning under the weight of heathen gods. Waller, perhaps, imbibed this taste for the ancient writers, from the intimate acquaintance he preserved with Morley, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, who, when young, and without preferment in the church, had been a constant inmate of the poet's house, and almost a dependent upon his bounty. But whatever might have been the accident which directed his curiosity to the main sources of classical knowledge, it is certain that he always showed himself both by his writings as well as his conversation, remarkably familiar with the works of ancient literature, and that he quoted them upon many occasions with great felicity and discernment.

Having established a double fame by the display of his poetical and political accomplishments, Waller next distinguished himself in the realms of fashion, by carrying off a rich heiress, and thus defeating a rival whose pretensions to the lady had been seconded

and warmly espoused by the court. It is not difficult to conceive that he must have proved a dangerous foe in such an encounter—his agreeable manner, his literary reputation, and his position in the world affording him a combination of advantages which few persons then possessed. This lady, the daughter of Edward Banks, Esq., a rich merchant in the City, did not live long to enjoy her good fortune, for having given birth to a son and daughter, she died in child-bed, leaving her husband a widower at the age of five-and-twenty, with all the world before him to choose. Whether he had married from a sincere affection, or merely for the purpose of acquiring the property which his wife's portion produced, cannot now be ascertained. He does not, however, appear to have solicited that natural retirement, or to have courted that laudable seclusion from the world, which he might have been expected to observe upon the occurrence of such a melancholy event. Nor has he left any tributary verse to the memory of this lady, although at the death of Lady Rich and the Countess of Northumberland, he attempted to inscribe their virtues upon what he was pleased to term an eternal monument of praise.

Upon the accession of Charles the First, Waller appeared at court, and in the first parliament of this monarch, which assembled in 1625, he represented Chipping Wycombe. The unhappy fate of Buckingham prompted him to eulogise Charles in a poem, where particular emphasis is laid upon the fortitude which the King displayed on hearing the news of

his favourite minister's death, and an elegant complimentary effusion, celebrating the virtues and beauty of the Queen, was also made public about this period. There is no evidence to show that these poems caused him to be much esteemed at court, or that any marks of royal favour were conferred in return for these efforts of his muse. It does not appear that he took any active part in the political disputes, which even at this early period of the reign had begun to assume an alarming aspect, although he continued to sit in Parliament until that assembly was dissolved by Charles in 1629, on account of the "seditious carriage of some vipers, members of the Lower House."

During the interval of eleven years in which the King dispensed wholly with Parliaments, and attempted to govern by prerogative alone, Waller retired to his country seat at Beaconsfield, where he continued principally to reside. Owing to his local influence as a large landed proprietor, and his reputation as a scholar, he now enjoyed the privilege of entering the best society of the time, and having formed an intimacy with Lord Falkland and several accomplished literati, became regarded as one of the most fashionable and gallant wits of the day. Shortly after this compulsory retirement from political life had commenced, he appears to have shown a desire to re-enter the matrimonial state, and it would seem that upon this occasion he made rank rather than fortune his principal aim. Indeed, from his affluent possessions, the dowry must have been a very secondary consideration, in comparison with the titled honours

to which he now aspired. Being, like most poets, excessively vain, if a more severe epithet be not merited, he ambitiously demanded the hand of Lady Dorothea Sydney, the eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester, but this lady either entertaining the hope of forming an alliance more suitable to her rank, or from a real antipathy to the manners of her suitor, rejected his solicitations with a haughty disdain, and refused to listen to those pathetic appeals which his tender passion was constantly pouring forth to conquer her dislike and acquire her esteem. Under the euphonious appellation of Sacharissa, he addressed to this inexorable beauty such a variety of poems, that one would have supposed them sufficient to subdue the proudest heart; but all in vain, for at length in some verses written in the Earl's park, at Penshurst, we find the poet confessing that Apollo had commanded him to shun the presence of such a cruel and unrelenting nymph. In these lines he upbraids her with a thousand reproaches, and yields himself up to a perfect climax of despair—

“While in this park I sing, the listening deer
Attend my passion and forget to fear;
When to the beeches I report my flame,
They bow their heads, as if they felt the same.
To gods appealing, when I reach their bowers
With loud complaints, they answer me in showers:
To thee a wild and cruel soul is given,
More deaf than trees, and prouder than the heaven!”

It was probably to obliterate this disappointment, that Waller undertook the sea voyage which is supposed to have given rise to his poem on the Whales; since from

the circumstantial manner in which the incidents of the tale are related, his biographers conjecture, he must have been an eye witness to something of the kind. Whether this adventure to the Southern Ocean was a fiction or a reality, we know not, but it is certain that the poet's despondency soon vanished, for we find him before long appealing to Lady Sophia Murray, as Amoret, in verses which display an equal amount of fondness and flattery as those which he had addressed to Sacharissa. In one passage he contrasts the qualities of these ladies with such felicity that the lines have since been frequently quoted—

“Amoret! as sweet and good
As the most delicious food;
Which but tasted doth impart
Life and gladness to the heart:
Sacharissa's beauty's wine,
Which to madness doth incline,
Such a liquor as no brain
That is mortal can sustain.”

In the year 1639, Lady Dorothy married Henry Lord Spenser, who was soon afterwards created Earl of Sunderland by Charles I., for the active part he took in supporting the Royalist cause. This nobleman, however, unfortunately perishing at the disastrous battle of Newbury, their hymeneal life proved of short duration. He is described by a contemporary as “A lord of great fortune and early judgment! who having no command in the army, attended upon the king's person under the obligation of honour, and putting himself that day (Sept. 20th, 1643) as a volunteer in the king's troop, before they came to

charge, was carried away by a cannon shot." Lady Sunderland survived her husband about forty years, and it is recorded of her, that meeting Waller accidentally in society, when she was far advanced in years, she asked him when he would again write such verses upon her, a question to which the poet rather sarcastically replied "When you are as young my Lady and as handsome as you were then." Though his suit was rejected by Lady Dorothy, Waller continued to be on terms of intimacy with the Earl of Leicester, to whom, as well as his younger daughter, Lady Lucy, two of his poems are addressed. In a letter which he wrote to this young lady, after the marriage of Lady Dorothy, he says with his characteristic good humour, "May my Lady Dorothy (if we may yet call her so) suffer as much and have the like passion for this young lord, whom she has preferred to the rest of mankind, as others have had for her."

Perceiving that all hopes of subduing the haughty Sacharissa, or of winning the more retiring Amoret were vain, Waller bestowed his attentions upon a lady of the family of Bresse; and since we do not find that she was the subject of any poetical entreaties or amatory lectures it may very reasonably be inferred that the conquest of her affections was not difficult. As Dr. Johnson observes, "He doubtless praised some whom he would be afraid to marry, and perhaps married one whom he would have been ashamed to praise." The most substantial fact recorded of this lady, is that she brought her husband five sons and eight daughters, and if we may form an opinion from

Evelyn's remarks in his diary, who long enjoyed a close intimacy with Waller's family, their domestic happiness was all that could be desired. The poetic temperament is not, perhaps, altogether the most suitable for increasing the pleasures of the married life, but Waller did not evince sufficient of that irritability of temper which is so frequently attendant upon a highly imaginative mind, as to render him a disagreeable husband or a morose companion. The fire of his genius was not so ardent, as to cause the heat of its passions to be intense or unbearable. He had no occasion like Milton to write a treatise upon the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, nor was he like Byron interrupted by the visit of a physician to ascertain whether he was sane. Waller differed from Montaigne, who, upon becoming a widower, declared that "he would not marry a second time, though the lady were Wisdom herself."

During the interval in which the King thought proper to dispense with the use of Parliaments, Waller being free from political duties, occupied his leisure by resorting to poetical composition. It was at this period that the poem on the Navy was written—a panegyric supposed to refer to that fleet which Charles fitted up with the famous Ship-Money, to chastise the Dutch for their daring encroachments upon the English fisheries. A fragment on the taking of Salle, a city in the province of Fez, infested by pirates, followed; and subsequently, some lines upon the repairs of St. Paul's Cathedral, a work then being effected by means of the enormous fines which Laud was extort-

ing from the disobedient Puritans in that arbitrary tribunal, the Star-Chamber. Lord Clarendon observes, "Persons of honour were every day cited into the Star-Chamber, and there prosecuted to their shame and punishment; and as the shame was never forgiven, but watched for revenge, so the fines imposed there were the more questioned and repined at, because they were assigned to the rebuilding and repairing of St. Paul's Church." These poems all being dedicated to the King, prove that Waller had not yet deserted the Court, or joined that vigorous opposition to the crown which was fast ripening into rebellion and civil war.

Some verses which Waller addressed to Van Dyck the celebrated painter, were also written about this period. Judging from the familiar manner in which the poet compliments and flatters the artist, we may presume they were accustomed to associate in some of the literary circles of the day. Perhaps, Van Dyck had painted Sacharissa, for in this epistle, Waller evidently appears to refer to the Penshurst beauty, when he says,

"Another, who did long refrain,
Feels his old wound bleed fresh again,
With dear remembrance of that face,
Where now he reads new hope of grace."

Before the King's finances had become hopelessly embarrassed, by his determined opposition to the Parliament, he had been enabled to bestow a considerable amount of patronage upon the fine arts, in a manner calculated to improve the taste of the people, as well as to encourage and emulate national talent. Horace Walpole admits, that from the accession of

Charles I., we must date the first era of true taste in England. Henry VIII. invited Holbein to his Court. Elizabeth and her Maids of Honour sat to Zuccherò. James condescended to entertain Rubens, and talk pedantry with Inigo Jones; but it was reserved for Charles to bring a critical judgment, a correct erudition, and a discerning taste to the task of appreciating genius, and recognising true art. Under the patronage of James, Inigo Jones had reared the stately palace of Whitehall, while Rubens had adorned its walls with his unrivalled skill. Charles purchased the collection of pictures belonging to the Duke of Mantua, then one of the most considerable in Europe, and invited foreign artists to assist him in diffusing taste among his subjects. Many noblemen emulated their royal master in his taste for the arts. The Duke of Buckingham, Lord Arundel, Lord Falkland, and Sir Kenelm Digby were each famed, either for their generous patronage, or zealous exertion in the cause of art. At the suggestion of Sir Kenelm, Charles was on the point of giving Van Dyck a commission to embellish the Banqueting Room at Whitehall, in order that it might become a worthy rival of the Louvre. The painter required £80,000; the King demurred; they separated—the one to die, the other to undergo trials worse than death itself.

Several poems addressed to Lucy, Countess of Carlisle, show that Waller was among the numerous admirers of that gifted but dangerous beauty. In one of these pieces, he aspires to perform knight service for this lady, as her champion, by using the weapon of

satire against some writer who had attempted to prejudice her character in a libel ; but Waller's strength lay not in this direction, his enmity is effeminate, his rage ridiculous, and his invective impotent. His darts never pierce deeper than did the needles of the Lilliputians on the nose of Gulliver ! His wounds are not mortal. This lady, the daughter of Henry, Earl of Northumberland, had married James Hay, Earl of Carlisle, a nobleman, who, in conjunction with Lord Holland, arranged the terms of Henrietta Maria's marriage at the court of France. He afterwards degenerated into a worthless spendthrift, and having dissipated an estate of four hundred thousand pounds, left not so much as a house, an acre, or a good action to be remembered by. His biographer acknowledges, " that he had no other consideration for money than for the support of his lustre, and while he could maintain that, he cared not for money, having no bowels on the point of running into debt or borrowing all he could." Upon the death of this depraved man, (for his vices are beneath notice) Lady Carlisle became constantly attached to the service of the Court, where acquiring an extraordinary influence over the mind of Henrietta Maria, she was tempted to enter into those base intrigues, which exercised a most prejudicial influence in widening the breach between the King and his Parliament, and which have since left such a lasting stigma of infamy upon her reputation. Subsequent revelations have now confirmed the fact, that she acted the mean part of a spy in the palace, betraying the Court by furnishing the leading members of the opposition with in-

telligence of whatever designs Charles had in contemplation respecting the conduct of that unhappy dispute. She has been termed the *Helen* of her country, but her actions would more nearly find a parallel in those of Judas. Public rumour accused her of being the mistress of Pym, of this however we have no certain proof, although the general tenor of her conduct warrants the surmise. History has placed her perfidy beyond the reach of doubt. In the attempted arrest of the Five Members, that fatal and most culpable of all the designs which Charles ever entertained, she completely thwarted his plans by affording precise information of the projected seizure to the accused members, who were thus enabled to seek safety in the City by a previous flight, and defy the King. Charles had entrusted the secret to the queen, who, when waiting in the presence of Lady Carlisle for intelligence of the successful termination of the *coup de main*, confidently exclaimed, "Rejoice ! for I hope that the King is now master in his states, and that such and such (naming the five members) are in custody." No one who has any regard for the cause of liberty or the vindication of right, could desire Charles to have been successful in this flagrant violation of the prescriptive privileges of Parliament; yet few will be found to regard this perfidious treachery of Lady Carlisle's, except as one of the most despicable actions of which a woman was ever guilty. Unfortunate, indeed, must have been that Princess, whose interest and whose honour were entrusted to the keeping of such a friend. In justice to Waller, we must admit that his laboured

panegyrics upon Lady Carlisle were written before this vile transaction had occurred, although it must be confessed he showed upon many occasions but little discrimination in selecting the subjects of his praise. His eulogies too frequently appear as though their principal purpose was only to obtain some reciprocal compliment in return.

In the great crisis to which the affairs of the kingdom were rapidly hastening, and which under the name of the Great Rebellion constitutes so memorable an epoch in English History, Waller was destined to perform a conspicuous though not altogether a very creditable part. His relationship to Hampden, the great champion of the popular cause, combined with the political reputation which he had acquired in the early Parliaments of this unhappy reign, naturally urged him into the heat of the tumult, and if he behaved there with less courage and discretion than befitted him, we must, to use the language of one of his biographers, refrain from condemning him with untempered severity, "because he was not a prodigy which the world hath seldom seen, because his character included not the poet, the orator, and the hero." It had, perhaps, been better for Waller's reputation, had he, like Atticus, have turned away from the stormy councils and the passionate strife of political life, to enjoy that learned leisure, that *honestium otium* in which he was far more eminently adapted to shine than amidst the troubled and agitated contentions of the tribune and the senate.

The King's adversities in Scotland having compelled

him to assemble a Parliament in the month of April, 1640, Waller obtained his re-election for Amersham without difficulty. From his relationship to Hampden and his intimate connexion with the leading members of the opposition, the courtiers supposed him to be adverse to the cause of prerogative—a suspicion subsequently verified by his language in the House, although he expressed upon all occasions great reverence for the King's legitimate authority, and showed an eager desire to conciliate the enemies of Royalty by advising temperate concessions. On his Majesty's demand being read in the Commons, desiring an immediate supply before grievances were redressed, or petitions listened to, Waller in a forcible and energetic speech remonstrated with the King's advisers upon the impolitic step they had taken in pressing such a claim, and rebuked the clergy in a tone of sarcastic irony for their disgraceful conduct in stooping to attribute a divine right to sovereign power. "The Kings of this nation," said he, "have always governed by Parliaments; and if we look upon the success of things since Parliaments were laid by, it resembles that of the Grecians, *Ex illo fluere ac retro sublapsa referri res Danaum*, especially on the subjects' part, for though the King hath got little, they have lost all." Referring to the clergy, he observed, "They gain preferment, and then 'tis no matter though they neither believe themselves, nor are believed of others; but since they are so ready to let loose the consciences of Kings, we are the more carefully to provide for our protection against this *pulpit law*, by declaring and

reinforcing the municipal laws of this kingdom." In concluding his speech, he warned the courtiers and their adherents to consider the requests of the people before supplies were pressed, and then moved "That this House do first restore to the nation its fundamental and vital liberties, and then consider the supply desired." The sentiments expressed by Waller on this occasion were manly and just, but while his opposition to the policy of the royal council appeared so vehement, he was too loyal not to wish that the King's distresses should be lightened. One of Waller's biographers relates that King Charles sent particularly to him, to second a demand of some subsidies to pay off the army; and Sir Henry Vane objecting against first voting a supply because the King would not accept unless it came up to his proportion, Mr. Waller spoke earnestly to Sir Thomas Jermyn to save his master from so bold a falsity, for said he, "I am but a country gentleman, and cannot pretend to know the King's mind," but Sir Thomas durst not contradict the Secretary, and his son, the Earl of St. Albans, afterwards told Waller that his father's cowardice ruined the King.

In the Long Parliament, Waller was again chosen for Amersham, and continued to support Hampden upon all important questions with his vote. His ability in debate must have been regarded by the popular party as considerable, since he was selected to manage the prosecution of Judge Crawley, for the illegal opinion that magistrate had delivered in favour of imposing Ship-Money. The public considered the

address of Waller in conducting this impeachment as such a masterpiece of acrimonious invective, that when published we are told twenty thousand copies were sold in a single day, and certainly there are passages in the speech not altogether unworthy of this success. At the conclusion of his arguments, he said finely, "To him, my Lords, that has thus played with the power of Parliaments, we may well apply what was once said to the goat browsing on the vine: *Rode caper vitem! tamen hinc cum stabis ad aram, in tua quod fundi coruna possit erit.* He has cropped and infringed upon the privileges of a banished Parliament, but now it is returned he may find it has power enough to make a sacrifice of him to the better establishment of our laws."

Though he could thus boldly advocate the great principles which the friends of liberty were striving to establish, he possessed sufficient moderation to abstain from yielding to such revolutionary innovations as he conceived were subversive of true freedom. When, for instance, the expulsion of the Bishops from Parliament was proposed, he discriminated admirably between the advantages to be derived from a reformation of Episcopacy and the evils which would follow its total abolition. In one passage he particularly alludes to the danger of those excesses which an excited populace are but too apt to commit when inflamed by a sudden accession of power. "If," says he, "we must deny the people nothing when they ask it thus in troops, we shall soon have as hard a task to defend our property as we lately had to recover it from the pre-

rogative. An equality in things ecclesiastical may soon be followed by a demand for an equality in things temporal. If these great innovations proceed, I shall expect a flat and level in learning too, as well as in church preferments, *Honos alit Artes*. My view is that we reform, but not abolish Episcopacy." This is the reasonable language of a statesman, who is willing to accede to practical improvements, but not inclined from mere party ties to sanction the mischievous projects of democratic anarchists. These opinions were shared by Hyde and many of the more moderate members of the Parliament, for Hampden himself yielded but reluctantly to the expulsion of the Bishops from the House of Lords.

As Waller's name is not inserted in the list of Straffordians, or *enemies of their country*, as they were designated, we may safely conclude, his vote was given in favour of impeaching that guilty and obnoxious minister.

In the debate upon the Remonstrance, Waller spoke with vigour: "Laws," said he, "are the children of the Parliament, and we must not destroy them with orders and declarations. Freeholders have power to choose us freely to make laws, yet the King must not choose councillors to advise according to law without our approbation. This is a remonstrance against the laws." After a tumultuous sitting, in which swords were almost drawn by the members amidst the heat of argument, a majority of nine was declared in favour of the popular party, an important result, for Cromwell told Lord Falkland on leaving the House, that if the question

had been lost, he would have sold all his property the next morning, and never have seen England more. In truth, this was the period when the country party were in the greatest danger of defeat, for a considerable reaction had sprung up in favour of Royalty, and would, probably, have continued to increase, but for the imprudent arrest of the Five Members which followed close upon this division.

In Verney's account of the debate upon the King's answer to the Nineteen Propositions, Waller is reported to have quaintly said, "Let us first look to our saifty, and then to our honour." Words we might almost suppose Sir Ralph had sarcastically transposed, after witnessing the poet's subsequent conduct. Many remarks Waller made in the House, show that he often entertained the members with sallies of wit; thus, when some one proposed that the troopers of the Parliament force should be skilful and trusty, he observed, "Yes, I agree to that, for they should be skilful lest the horses run away with them, and trusty lest they run away with the horses."

When the Parliament ventured to raise an army against the King, in 1642, many of the leading members of the Royalist party withdrew from the House of Commons altogether, refusing any longer to acknowledge the authority of an assembly, the majority of which they regarded as rebels. A small section of moderate men, including Hyde, Selden, Rudyard, and others, continued, however, their attendance in the House, imagining that although the dispute had passed to great extremities, it was still possible to con-

clude an honourable pacification between the rival factions by reciprocal concessions. Waller enjoying the confidence, and sharing the opinions of these men, became their most prominent leader in the House, where he was allowed to speak his thoughts freely, as there was no danger of his party becoming anything but an insignificant minority, unless the Royalist seceders should resume their seats. Lord Clarendon remarks, that Waller spoke every day with impunity against the sense and proceedings of the House, and that he was looked upon as the boldest champion the crown had to vindicate its cause in the Commons.

The Parliament having in 1643 appointed a commission to propose conditions of peace to the King, at Oxford, after the battle of Edgehill, Waller, from his standing in the House, contrived to be nominated upon the list. When the deputation were presented, the King took especial notice of him, and observed on parting, "Though you are the last, you are not the lowest or the least in my favour,"—a compliment so flattering to the poet's vanity, that he surrendered what slight connexion he had hitherto retained with the popular party, and returned to London a confirmed Royalist. In fact, but for the influence which his kinsman Hampden exercised over him, it may be questioned whether Waller would ever have taken a seat on the opposition benches, the natural tendency of his opinions having been from first to last decidedly monarchical.

This change in his political views, however, hurried him into an ill-advised plot, which, by its unhappy

termination, proved the great misfortune of his life, and almost brought him to the verge of ruin. Whether any arrangements were entered into between Waller and the King, at Oxford, by which the former pledged himself to conspire against the Parliament, remains uncertain; but if no actual engagement was then made, Waller's loyalty revived so ardently after this interview with the King, that upon his return to London, he immediately formed a confederacy with several intimate friends, who were, like himself, anxious for peace, and determined to hazard great risks to obtain it. After holding several preliminary meetings, the following plan of operations was arranged by Waller and his coadjutors, as necessary to the accomplishment of their design. To take under their custody the King's children—to seize, under pretence of bringing them to a legal trial, several members of both houses, the lord mayor of London, and the committee of militia acting for the Parliament—to seize upon all the important posts and magazines of the city of London—to let in the King's forces, surprise the city, and destroy all those who by authority of Parliament should oppose them—and, lastly, to resist all payments imposed by the Houses of Parliament, for the support of those armies employed in their defence. In order to procure a military force sufficient to carry out these designs, and to show some appearance of legal authority for their proceedings, the conspirators had obtained from the King a commission of array empowering them to raise men and money for the prosecution of the war. This document was directed

to Sir Nicholas Crispe, who being a most zealous Royalist, and possessing great influence in the city, appeared the most likely person to turn the commission to account. The requisite papers having been signed by the King, were brought from Oxford by Lady D'Aubigny, who concealing them in her hair, contrived to transmit them safely to Sir Nicholas. It has been usually supposed that the plots of Waller and Crispe were perfectly distinct from each other, but we cannot see how Waller could have anticipated the slightest chance of success, unless he expected Sir Nicholas would be enabled to raise a force superior to that of the Parliament in London by this commission of array. Besides, after the miscarriage of the plot and apprehension of the conspirators had occurred, the document itself was found concealed in the house of Tomkins, one of the principals in Waller's intrigue.

The chief parties who undertook the management of this scheme in conjunction with Waller, were his brother-in-law, Mr. Tomkins, and Mr. Chaloner, an intimate acquaintance. Tomkins was clerk of the Queen's council, and possessed considerable influence in the city of London, where he had formed extensive connections. Waller and his colleagues commenced their task with extreme caution, observing the greatest secrecy in their first deliberations. It was agreed, that when others came to be admitted to their councils, only three should ever meet at one time, and that no man should ever impart the plot to more than two others. Waller at this period enjoyed great popularity, being universally esteemed for his political ability, as

well as for his refined wit and elegant manners ; and since from possessing these qualifications he had acquired the confidence of many considerable persons, it was not long before he freely divulged his design and solicited their assistance. Lords Conway, Northumberland, and Portland, all acquiesced in his scheme, and intimated a hope that it might succeed. In the City also, Tomkins had given information to all the important persons on whom he thought dependence could be placed. Waller, however, proved but an indifferent conspirator, for instead of keeping his design a profound secret, except to the principals engaged, till the enterprise should be ripe for execution, both he and his friends went about for weeks beforehand relating what wonders might be expected, and what prodigies would shortly happen. Having been introduced to many ladies of fashion by his poetical reputation, Waller, when visiting such acquaintances, imparted his political intrigues without reserve ; but these revelations, though intended to stop with those who listened to them, might almost as well have been printed in the streets, for who that wishes to keep a secret would mention it to half-a-dozen ladies of fashion in a drawing room. On such occasions it would have been better if he had contented himself with admiring their fans, or presenting them with verses upon their beauty, accomplishments in which he was indeed eminently fitted to excel. In playing so hazardous a game as that of insurrection, surprise was half the victory, for if the intended victims could prepare resistance beforehand, little else than a miser-

able failure might be anticipated. Indeed, the leaders of the parliamentary party were far too wily and experienced to be outwitted by such novices as Waller and his companions ; and having once obtained information of the projected plot, a strict watch was kept to entrap the parties implicated before any serious mischief should occur. This was speedily effected, for a spy, placed by one of the servants behind the hangings in Tomkins' house, having overheard a long conference between the conspirators, carried the purport of their stratagems, as well as a list of their names, direct to Pym, who, perceiving at a glance the importance of the plot, determined to crush it in the bud.

In order to heighten the effect which the publication of so wide-spread a conspiracy must produce, and to discourage all future attempts of a similar nature, Pym and his colleagues concluded upon making a striking example of the principle offenders by visiting them with summary punishment as traitors to their country. The 31st of May (1643) being a solemn fast day, it was arranged that when the members of both houses were engaged in listening to the sermon, a messenger should hurry into the church and inform Pym that a serious conspiracy had been detected, which required his immediate attention. This manœuvre was accordingly practised in the manner described, Pym and several of his colleagues abruptly quitting the church with consternation depicted on their faces, to hold a council for the immediate safety of the state. Guards were immediately placed over all the principal prisons. Communications were forwarded to the citizens of

London, and the Committee of Militia, apprising them of the imminent danger they had escaped. Waller, Tomkins, and Chaloner, were arrested before night and committed to separate prisons. Each member of the two Houses of Parliament, was required to take an oath "not to lay down arms so long as the Papists now in arms should be protected from the justice of Parliament, and never to adhere to or willingly assist the forces of the King without the consent of both Houses." Lastly, a solemn day of thanksgiving was appointed to commemorate the wonderful escape Parliament had made through the fortunate discovery of the plot before its execution was attempted.

The sudden and separate manner in which the conspirators were apprehended, proved fatal to their defence, for it is a remarkable fact, that the Parliament possessed no very substantial proofs of their criminality, until the culprits, from fear, confessed their guilt and divulged their schemes. Tomkins ruined everything by giving notice where the commission of array might be found buried in his garden, which document being produced from the spot he described, formed a most unequivocal and conclusive evidence against the whole party. Waller, equally explicit in his confession, revealed even more than his adversaries desired, for as Dr. Johnson observes, "it is often inconvenient in the conflict of factions to have that disaffection known, which cannot be safely punished." History relates that when Lucan was seized for conspiring with Piso, against Nero, he was so overcome with fear, and so eager to obtain a promise of pardon, that he accused

his own mother of being an accomplice. Waller, like the Roman poet, exhibited a weakness of character, quite as mean and ignoble, criminating all his friends, and even uttering false statements with the hope that such an *apparently* candid confession would incline his judges to show mercy at his trial. Lord Clarendon remarks, that "Waller was so confounded with fear and apprehension, that he confessed whatever he had said, heard, thought, or seen, all that he knew of himself, and all that he suspected of others; without concealing any person of what degree or quality soever, or any discourse that he had ever upon any occasion entertained with them." It is impossible to reflect upon the baseness of which Waller was guilty in this extremity, without feeling that he is almost beneath contempt. Nothing can well exceed the heartless manner in which he betrayed and sacrificed his friends, with the hope of thus propitiating justice and obtaining an acquittal. He related all that he could recollect with reference to the plot, even to the most minute particulars. He accused Lords Portland, Conway, and Northumberland of being privy to his designs, and of having encouraged him to proceed. He revealed the names of all persons who, to his knowledge, had corresponded with the King's ministers at Oxford, and disclosed the private conversation of such ladies as had incautiously wished him success in his plots and treasons. Even the unfortunate servant, Hassel, who carried the message to Lord Falkland that 'the design had come to a good perfection,' was apprehended upon Waller's information.

The most ignominious part of Waller's conduct remains to be told. During the examination of the various prisoners detained upon suspicion, Waller being permitted to hold a conference with Lord Portland, pressed that nobleman to save both their lives by casting the blame upon Lords Northumberland and Conway. To such base expedients did this unhappy man resort in order to extricate himself from that fate of which he stood so much in dread.

A very short interval was allowed to elapse before the Parliament ordered the conspirators to be tried by a council of war. Tomkins and Chaloner were the first victims, for, being found guilty, they were hanged before their own private houses, with all the circumstances of severity and cruelty then applicable to traitors. Tomkins, when on the scaffold, admitted that it was *a foolish business*, but we are inclined to think, the folly consisted more in the preparation than the intent of the design, for had the plot been well contrived, it would have very much embarrassed the Parliament for the moment. Both Tomkins and Chaloner, however, died with great firmness, almost acknowledging the justice of their sentence. "I prayed God," said Chaloner, when ascending the scaffold, "that if this design might not be honourable to Him, it might be known, God heard me."—"I am glad," said Tomkins, "the plot has been discovered, for it might have occasioned very ill consequences." A noble contrast to Waller's abject baseness. Lords Northumberland, Conway, and Portland were all acquitted, as no satisfactory proofs could be furnished to attest

their guilt, except the evidence of Waller, who was now considered as hardly sufficiently sane to appear in court. Indeed, it is easy to believe, that Pym and his friends were glad of an excuse to avoid proceeding against such influential and powerful persons.

Waller, being brought to the bar of the House, implored the Parliament rather to proceed with his trial there, than to transfer him to a Council of War. Lord Clarendon supposes, that his life was saved by the speech he delivered upon this occasion, for although he was subsequently tried and condemned by a council of war, Essex and others interested themselves so earnestly with Pym as to obtain his reprieve. Waller being confessedly more guilty than the others, an excuse for such barefaced partiality was necessary—the Parliament, therefore, pretended that his sentence was put off out of Christian compassion till he might recover the use of his understanding. In the respite thus gained Waller applied all kinds of devices to evade capital punishment. He affected the greatest remorse of conscience for the past, and distributed large sums of money to the puritanical clergy appointed to advise him, so that by dissimulation and bribery, he contrived at length to gain a sufficient number of friends when the first heat of popular resentment had subsided to escape the scaffold. Probably his relationship to Hampden, and his poetical genius had some weight in influencing the decision of those persons in whose hands his fate rested, for after a year's imprisonment he was sentenced to pay a fine of £10,000, and permitted to recollect himself in another country.

It may be thought the Parliament visited the conspirators with more severity than was just. Perhaps they did, but we must bear in mind that the struggle between the Commons and the Crown had proceeded to such extremities that the former could not afford to treat so premeditated an attempt upon their authority with leniency or mercy. To have banished Tomkins and Chaloner would have amply sufficed for the purposes of justice in ordinary times, but amidst the anarchy of revolution, vindictive excesses on the part of the triumphant faction are inevitable.

A letter Dr. Wilson wrote to Sir Thomas Brown at the time tends to prove that Tomkins and Chaloner suffered exemplary punishment, to prevent future conspiracies. "This next day," says he, "being Thursday, Mr. Waller and the rest are to come to their trial in Guildhall, when I believe the delinquents would find mercy enough if the fear of tumult did not urge their judges to some vigorous severity."

Waller having chosen France for his place of exile, proceeded with his family to Rohan, where Margaret, his favourite daughter and amanuensis, was born. From thence he removed to Paris, where notwithstanding the diminution of his fortune he contrived to live in great splendour, and exercise a generous hospitality. In this city, we are told, he was the only Englishman, except Lord St. Alban's, who kept a table.

From Evelyn's diary, it appears Waller became acquainted with that estimable man, and frequently enjoyed his society while the troubles in England continued. In 1646, Evelyn alludes to their meeting at

Venice: "I departed," says he, "from Venice, accompanied with Mr. Waller, the celebrated poet, now newly gotten out of England, where the Parliament had extremely worried him, for attempting to put in execution the commission of array, for which the rest of his colleagues were hanged by the rebels. In 1647, they met at Orleans, "where," says Evelyn, "nothing came amiss; sometimes we played at cards; at others, sang or composed verses—for we had the great poet, Mr. Waller, in our company, and some other ingenious persons." "In September, 1651, I went," says Evelyn, "with my wife to St. Germain, to condole with Mr. Waller upon the loss of his daughter, Mrs. Evelyn being godmother to the child." This intimacy between Evelyn and Waller speaks well for the conduct of the latter during his exile, Evelyn possessing one of those well-regulated minds, which almost made his friendship a badge of good behaviour to those who were honoured with it.

After residing abroad for seven years, Waller's income became so impaired that he was reduced to the necessity of parting with his wife's jewels; but coming at last to the rump jewel, he solicited Cromwell's permission to return to England, and obtained it through the intercession of his brother-in-law, Colonel Scroop. His extravagant habits, added to the diminished revenues of his estates during the civil war, had no doubt occasioned his difficulties abroad, for when he returned in 1652 to Hall Barn, at Beaconsfield, where his mother resided, his fortune was scarcely half as much in amount as when he came of age. To escape

the consequences of the unhappy plot, he had been compelled to sell his Bedfordshire estates in a single day for £10,000, although they were valued at double that sum, while the numerous bribes which he dispensed with profusion upon the puritanical clergymen who came to give him spiritual advice, added greatly to his losses. By residing with his mother, he was now however enabled to live in a style suitable to a country gentleman, and though his income was considerably reduced, he still retained sufficient property to mix with the best society of the day.

Being related to Cromwell, Waller gained a ready admittance to the domestic circle of the Protector's family, and was frequently invited to join him in familiar conversation. It can be readily supposed that Waller's knowledge of the world, added to his exuberant wit and cheerful temperament, would render him a pleasing companion; and since Cromwell used the sectaries very much as tools, and listened to their fanatic rants as he would to so much gibberish, we can easily imagine the relief he derived from the society of such a sensible man as Waller. Upon one occasion, the poet being present when Cromwell was discoursing with these enthusiasts in the unintelligible cant of their mysterious jargon, appeared surprised at what passed. After the deputation had withdrawn, the Protector said to his friend, "Cousin Waller, I must talk to these men in their own way," resuming at the same time his ordinary style of conversation.

Waller's mother, whom Cromwell often visited, still retained her Royalist predilections, notwithstanding the

fame of her nephew ; and it is recorded that when they met, she would frequently taunt him about his illegal usurpation. Cromwell used upon these occasions good-naturedly to throw his napkin at her, remarking at the same time that it would be uncourteous for him to dispute with his aunt, but finding the old lady, like her son, rather inclined to do mischief out of doors, he confined her to the house of her daughter.

Waller now thought proper to make some return for the Protector's kindness by sounding his praise in the famous Panegyric, which has always been regarded as the masterpiece of his poetical works. The compliments are so elegantly conveyed, and so judiciously selected, that in reading the poem we are introduced at once to Cromwell in the height of almost regal exaltation, without appearing to learn by what usurpation and violence he had attained so elevated a position. All reference to the political troubles of the past is carefully avoided ; so that to read the poem, one might suppose England had been a republic for centuries before the Protector's rise. The subject it must be admitted contained much that was favourable in the shape of material for eulogistic praise. Cromwell had by his genius undoubtedly rescued the nation from the miseries of anarchy. The perfect manner in which he mastered and subdued rival factions at home, the authority which he gave the English government abroad, and the extensive dominion he added to his country by conquest on land and sea, all formed topics which it required but little genius to embellish and adorn.

The successful issue of the war with Spain, again called Waller into the field to praise the Protector's administration, and upon this occasion, well knowing Cromwell's secret aspirations for the title of royalty, he concludes the poem by expressing a wish to see his patron crowned. Cromwell was now indeed "*in all but name a King.*" Policy, however, obliged him to refuse the crown when proffered, though without doubt the personal assumption of royalty ever remained the ultimate purpose of his ambition.

"His conquering head has no more room for bays,
Then let it be as the glad nation prays;
Let the rich ore forthwith be melted down,
And the state fixed by making him a crown:
With ermine clad and purple let him hold
A royal sceptre made of Spanish gold."

The death of Cromwell furnished Waller's muse with a popular theme, for however sternly the zealots of the time might affect to proscribe poetry, as being incompatible with their life of godliness, they could scarcely refuse to listen to verses which professed to honour the memory of a man who had done them such signal service as the Protector. Dryden and Sprat both wrote similar elegies, and these, with Waller's, being published in 1659, all were soon forgotten in the vicissitudes that followed Cromwell's death. The work of Dryden bespeaks but little of his future power, being sadly marred by the presence of those extravagant and strange conceits which were then in vogue as the ornaments of the pindaric style of writing, as it was termed. Waller's verse contains neither happy expressions or novel thoughts; Sprat's is

tame and insipid. Where all are bad, comparisons are useless. As political events progressed, these eulogiums soon returned to plague their inventors, and when the tide of republicanism began visibly to ebb and recede, each poet, probably, wished his production in the fire, rather than in the hands of the public.

It might be supposed, that when the Restoration occurred, these writers would have remained silent spectators, but so far from courting obscurity, both Dryden and Waller exerted themselves to pay as much honour to Charles II., as they had recently shown to Cromwell. Waller's inconsistency now became so notorious, that his praise appeared quite ridiculous, for what value could be attached to encomiums which were granted alike, without distinction or qualification to persons whose political principles were as wide as the poles asunder. He had praised Charles I., he had flattered Cromwell, and he now stood ready to welcome Charles II. Perhaps he still retained such a lively recollection of the Council of War, that he determined never to swim against the tide for the future; at any rate, he acted thus, for it appeared as though if the Devil should seize the government of England, his Satanic Majesty might count upon a congratulatory ode from Waller to grace his inauguration. Doubtless the loss occasioned by the unhappy plot, had its effect in making the poet obedient and submissive to the ruling powers of the day, but there was certainly no occasion for such a public avowal of his servility, as these effusions of reverence appeared to indicate. We should remember that praise is only valuable in

proportion to the virtues and goodness of those who confer it, for, as Dr. Johnson elegantly observes, "he that has flattery ready for all whom the vicissitudes of the world happen to exalt, must be scorned as a prostituted mind that may retain the glitter of wit, but has lost the dignity of virtue."

It has been said of Charles II., that though his ministers were not all men of state, his favourites were all men of wit, a remark perfectly true, for such slight mental exertion as the King's natural indolence would admit of, was much more directed to reading works of amusement, than to the consideration of matters of state. Like Louis XV., he thought it sufficient "if things lasted his time," and epicurean like, he left the future to take care of itself. Even when he attended the debates in the Lords, it was not to listen to the politics discussed there, but merely to wile away an hour or two in laughing at the humours displayed by the speakers, so that he would often remark to his courtiers, that "it was as good as a play." His patronage to men of letters appears to have been about as widely extended as expensive habits and limited resources would allow, although he cannot always be praised for discretion in its distribution. Butler, who effected almost more for the cause of Royalty than Monk himself, was allowed to die in obscurity and want. Cowley could gain nothing for past services, and Davenant was left without provision, though his sufferings in the Royalist cause deserved a requital. After the Restoration, Waller soon gained admission at Court, where he became a great favourite, the King

especially delighting in his company, and often conversing with him upon subjects of wit. Charles alluding one day to the Congratulation, asked the poet why he had not written it as well as the Panegyric on Cromwell. Waller, with his usual readiness, replied, "Poets, Sir, succeed better in fiction than in truth." Charles, far from being deficient in critical ability, frequently offered suggestions to the wits about their works; thus, he actually furnished the plan of Dryden's poem, "The Medal," for one day talking to that writer in the Mall, he said, "If I were a poet (and I think I am poor enough to be one) I would write a poem on such a subject in the following manner." Dryden caught the idea, and executed the piece at once.

Like most persons who have once possessed a seat in the House of Commons, Waller desired to rejoin that assembly. In the Parliament which met in 1661, he was returned for Hastings, a borough he continued to represent during the remainder of this reign. He now accepted a commissionership of woods and plantations, and entered into the business of the House with his former vivacity and spirit. At the conference between the two Houses respecting the bill on conventicles, he jealously defended the privileges of the Commons from the encroaching ambition of the Lords. He told their Lordships how tender their predecessors had been of the privileges of the Upper House; but when the peace of the kingdom stands in competition with those privileges, then he apprehended those privileges must give way. He told them he thought if

they should own all to be the privileges of the Lords which might be demanded, they should be led like the man (who granted leave to his neighbour to pull off his horse's tail, meaning that he could not do it at once) that hair by hair had his horse's tail pulled off indeed ; so the Commons, by granting one thing after another might be served by the Lords." Burnet remarks that Waller was the delight of the House, and though old, said the liveliest things of any among them. He supported the Cabal, and afterwards Danby, but towards the conclusion of the reign took no prominent part in public affairs, beyond making an occasional speech when he had anything smart or facetious to contribute.

The motive which induced him to join Buckingham's faction is sufficiently discreditable. Being desirous to obtain the Provostship of Eton, which became vacant in 1665, he was emboldened to request it from the King, who gave consent without consideration. Lord Clarendon, then Chancellor, refused to set his seal to the grant because the office had been invariably filled by a churchman, and no valid reasons could be adduced to warrant a departure from so meritorious a practice. Waller, with a meanness of disposition unworthy of his position, took offence at Clarendon's determination, and joined the enemies of this minister in all their factious proceedings till exile placed the Chancellor beyond the reach of their malice. A year after Clarendon's banishment, another vacancy occurring, Waller again preferred his request, but Charles with more firmness than usual said he would

not break the law, and ratified the appointment of Dr. Cradock, the choice of the Fellows.

Whether Waller voted in favour of the Exclusion Bill or against it we cannot discover, but when the Duke of York was exercising an almost regal influence in England, the poet is recorded to have said that "the House of Commons had resolved the Duke should not reign after the King's death, but the King, in opposition to them, had resolved he should reign even in his lifetime."

At the accession of James II., Waller, though eighty years of age, was returned for Saltash, a borough in Cornwall. From his frequent conferences with the King, it appears that he contrived to retain the favour of this monarch without making any humiliating sacrifice in the shape of a pretended religious conversion; a circumstance sufficiently laudable, when so many around him were daily changing their faith purely to flatter royalty and obtain its rewards. Waller, still a poet, though of fourscore years, wrote "A Presage of the Downfal of the Turkish Empire," and presented it to the King on his birthday, but James found adversaries much nearer home than the Turks to engage his attention.

During the reign of Charles II., Waller had, probably, prepared the way for securing the friendship of James, from whom he appears to have received, even before the death of Charles, many marks of kindness and condescension. Several anecdotes are related of the familiarity with which James discoursed with him in the *closetings*, as the private interviews between

Kings and their friends were then termed. One day the King taking him into a room of the palace pointed to a particular picture, and asked Waller's opinion of it. "My eyes," said Waller, "are dim, and I do not know it." The King said it was the Princess of Orange. "She is," said the old courtier, "like the greatest woman in the world." The King asked who was that? Waller answered, "Queen Elizabeth." "I wonder," said the King, "you should think so, but I must confess she had a wise council." "And, Sir," said Waller, "did you ever know a fool choose a wise one." When the King heard that Waller's daughter was about to marry Dr. Birch, a clergyman of the Church of England, he ordered one of the courtiers to say that "the King wondered he could think of marrying his daughter to a falling church." "The King," replied Waller, "does me great honour in taking notice of my domestic affairs, but I have lived long enough to observe that this falling church has got a trick of rising again."

As we might reasonably suppose, Waller's advanced age precluded him from taking any conspicuous part in politics after the King's accession. He is said to have remarked to his friends, when referring to the conduct of James, that "he would be left at last like a whale upon the strand"—an observation from which we may infer that Waller foresaw the evils he did not live to witness.

Atterbury, in editing Waller's poems, has remarked of him—"He continued an obstinate lover of rhyme to the very last: it was a mistress that never appeared

unhandsome in his eyes, and was courted by him long after Sacharissa was forsaken." As the infirmities of age gradually crept upon him, he appears to have retired from the world, and occupied himself in the society of his children. He was a man of too much good sense to be blind to those warnings by which every one who attains advanced age is more or less admonished. It is pleasing to reflect that he now turned his attention to matters of religion, and that though he continued to make verses, such productions principally referred to meditations upon divine subjects. These poems, it is true, have no pretensions as works of art, but in treating such an elevated subject as that of contemplative piety how few have succeeded. Sacred poetry is that species of writing which admits the least of mediocrity. It can hardly be anything but sublime or rapid, destined for immortality or condemned to immediate oblivion. Criticism cannot confer upon it partial praise. There is no middle course, for whoever selects an inspired theme must bring an inspired mind to the task,

"If to the height of his great argument
He would assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man."

The concluding reflections Waller made upon his Divine Poems contain one of those beautiful thoughts that few persons can read without feeling something of that tender melancholy with which the infirmity of age inspires us when approaching the confines of life.

"The soul's dark cottage battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks which time has made;
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home,

Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new."

A few months before his death, Waller purchased a small estate near Coleshill, remarking at the time to one of his daughters that he should be glad to die like the stag where he was first roused. He did not however live to gratify this desire. Perceiving when at Beaconsfield his legs grow timid, he went to Windsor and requested Sir Charles Scarborough both as a friend and a physician to tell him what that swelling meant. "Your blood," replied the doctor, "will run no longer." Waller repeated some lines of Virgil, and went home to die.

The disease did not give him long time for preparation, yet in the short interval which preceded his death, he applied himself to perform such religious duties as were applicable to his situation. Dr. Birch, his son-in-law, administered the Sacrament, and Waller, in the presence of his children, made an earnest declaration of his faith in Christianity. He retained his cheerfulness to the last, relating many anecdotes of circumstances which he had witnessed in his long experience at Court.

After lingering for a month or two, death removed him from the scene on the 21st of October, 1687. He was buried at Beaconsfield, where his children erected a monument to his memory, for which Rymer the historiographer wrote a Latin inscription. In the churchyard at Beaconsfield this pyramidal tomb may still be seen. It is overshadowed by a large walnut tree, and remains very perfect, considering the time that has

elapsed since it was raised. Waller's eldest son was disinherited on account of defective intellect, so that Edmund, the second, succeeded to the estate. The rest of his family probably suffered the usual dispersion which follows the death of parents. Some of the poet's direct descendants, however, still reside in Buckinghamshire, or did so at a very recent date.

Respecting Waller's personal appearance, we glean from Aubrey's notes the following particulars: "He is somewhat above the middle stature, but not at all robust; fine thin skin, his face somewhat of an *olivaster*; his hair of a brownish colour; his eye prominent; his face oval; his forehead high and full of wrinkles. His head is small, his brain very hot, and apt to be choleric. He is somewhat magisterial, and hath received a great mastership of the English language. He is of admirable elocution, graceful, and exceeding ready. Notwithstanding his great wit, he will oftentimes be guilty of misspelling in English. He writes a lamentable hand—as bad as the scratching of a hen." Like every other celebrity of the time, Waller had his portrait painted by Kneller—an engraving of which may be found at the commencement of Fenton's edition of his works. In this painting he is represented in the ordinary dress of a country gentleman of the time. His countenance is dignified and intellectual, and though serious, not melancholic, giving us the idea of what Pope used to call 'the true nobleman look.'

Although Waller's property was materially diminished by his misfortunes in the Civil War, his position through life may be considered as one of competence,

if not of affluence. We do not find him applying for pensions from the Court, nor becoming a dependent upon the bounty of those generous patrons, to whom Dryden and others stood so much indebted. Neither was he the slave of booksellers,—“those cruel bee masters, who burn the poor Athenian bees for their honey.” On the contrary, far from being a literary drudge, he seems to have enjoyed a pleasant independence, writing when his humour disposed him to study, and abstaining from composition when disinclined. Such a fortunate position as this, is the happiest lot to which a man of letters can aspire, and one in which genius is less likely to be warped than when let out to hire merely to satisfy the necessities of the moment. To live in this state of idlesse is like dwelling in that pleasant Castle, where

“ they wake the lyre,
And carol what unbid the Muses might inspire;”

or wandering through those enchanted gardens of Armida,

“ Where in perpetual summer shade
Apollo’s prophets sit,
Among the flowers that never fade,
But flourish like their wit.

To whom the nymphs upon their lyres
Tune many a curious lay,
And with their most melodious quires
Make short the longest day.”

Frequenting the society of the most accomplished writers of the age, Waller was often induced from the fashion of the times to take part in several works with other wits; thus, he wrote the first act in Lord Buck-

hurst's translation of Corneille's *Pompey*, and is said to have assisted in embellishing the *Rehearsal*. Another of his most congenial tasks was that of complimenting authors upon their works in congratulatory poems. His friend Evelyn and Sir W. Davenant received from him favours of this kind.

It is curious to contrast the importance which Waller's contemporaries attached to his writings with the mean estimation in which they are held at the present day. In the height of his fame he was regarded as the Virgil of the nation, his works being even more esteemed than those of Milton, who after *Comus* and *Lycidas* had been published, we find obliged to speak of himself as 'a person but little known.' When that imperishable poem, "*Paradise Lost*," was first exposed to lay as waste paper on the bookseller's stalls, Waller having by chance taken it up, wrote to the Duke of Buckingham as follows: "Milton, the old blind schoolmaster, has lately written a poem on the Fall of Man, *remarkable for nothing except its extreme length*." But time at last sets all things even. Who now reads Waller! Who does not know of Milton's fame! Dryden, with a generosity worthy of his own lofty genius, acknowledged the merit of Milton's Epic in unmistakeable language. "It is," said he, "undoubtedly one of the greatest, the noblest, and most sublime poems which this age or nation has produced."

Considering the length of time Waller kept possession of the stage as a poetical writer, and the paucity of his works, he must either have composed slowly and

corrected diligently, or have allowed the Muse long intervals of rest between her labours. Fenton remarks that the verses he inscribed in the Tasso of the Duchess of York, occupied him a whole summer in composition. If such were the case, never was a poet's summer so wasted, since the fragment is about one of the most inanimate and spiritless productions that ever flowed from his pen. In writing poetry, the first conception is everything, for if that be defective no subsequent labour can pour life into the ideas and make them "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." The faultless beauty and lyric sweetness of Gray's verse amply explains the advantages derived from the fastidious correction to which he subjected it. In Waller's we see no finely wrought passages to convince us that his extraordinary diligence and patient revision produced any good results.

Although passionately fond of society, and delighting to share in that exhilarating mirth which springs from the convivial conversation of Bacchanalian assemblies, Waller seldom yielded to the temptations of the cup, or committed those degrading excesses of intemperance so much the disgrace of the age in which he lived. His austere temperance became almost proverbial, and though he drank nothing but water, his disposition was so cheerful, and his conversation so engaging, that Mr. Saville his friend used to remark, "No man in England should keep him company without drinking but Ned Waller." Aubrey confirms this report of his austere sobriety. "He had but a tender weak body, and was always very temperate.

—— made him once damnable drunke at Somerset House, where at the water stairs he fell downe and had a cruel fall. Pity to use such a sweet swan so inhumanly." Milton is said to have had "a pipe of tobacco and a glass of faire water" every evening while engaged in composing "Paradise Lost," for Poetry was then as now—

"The first to fly where sensual joys invade."

Waller appears to have been a perfect man of the world. He was born to shine in society and excel in courts. It was there that his accomplishments showed to the best advantage, and glittered with the greatest effect. An adept in the profession of gallantry and love, eminently well skilled in paying compliments of wit, and perfect in the practice of those little arts of pleasing which are seldom used in vain, it is no wonder that in society he was courted by the great and admired by the fair. His constant gaiety of thought, his abundant humour, his sparkling jests seasoned with an occasional shrewd remark, and his delicate raillery rendered him the delight of company, and conferred upon him a reputation as a conversationist, almost as brilliant and universal as that which distinguished Sheridan during the Regency. A man of poetical genius or of highly imaginative mind, rarely proves an ornament or an acquisition to what is termed, general society. He who thinks deeply, must of necessity spend many hours in solitude, and solitude has a tendency to render men reserved and cold in their address, inattentive to the conventional business of social intercourse, and undisciplined in the manners

and customs of the world. Such a man, if drawn into the fashionable crowds who assemble to indulge in the charms of social pleasure, is too often obliged to confess with the sage, at the Court of Cyprus, "that what he knows is not proper for the place, and that what is proper for the place he knows not." Addison was in society as reserved as his own *Spectator*, except with a chosen few. Dryden has told us that he was himself saturnine and reserved, and not one of those who endeavour to entertain company by lively sallies of merriment and wit. Gray acknowledges that he had a want of love for general society, indeed an inability to it. Corneille, when rallied about his conversational deficiencies, retorted that wanting such accomplishments, he was not the less Corneille.

The life which Waller led after the Restoration, appears to have been dignified and respectable. His companions reflected no discredit upon him, nor did he obtain an unenviable notoriety by the practice of habitual dissoluteness and vice. Indeed, when we consider the universal and scandalous immorality of the age, as well as the temptations to which he was naturally exposed by his reputation as a wit, it must be conceded, that he conducted himself with a decorous and becoming propriety. We do not find him indulging in ribaldry and obscenity with Sedley and Ogle in their Bow Street orgies, or dissipating with Mulgrave and Dorset in their theatrical revels. He neither imitated the shameless profligacy of Wycherly, or studied to rival the profanity of Buckingham. He was not like Pepys, on familiar terms with women of such doubtful

reputation as Mrs. Knipp, nor did he emulate the lavish voluptuousness of such a debauched monster as Rochester. Though exposed to the full influence of those fascinating and attractive charms by which so many were lured into the toils of vice, though tempted by the syren and seductive voice of beauty in one of the most profligate of courts, and though the confident and friend of a Prince, whose delight consisted in the deliberate practice of libertinism and sensuality, Waller so far retained the mastery of his passions as to pass the straits of this Scylla and Charbydis, without the shipwreck of his character. His gallantry may sometimes appear frivolous and trifling, yet he deserves credit for the reverential homage he invariably paid to female excellence, as well as for the delicacy of taste with which his flattery to the sex was always administered. He is said to have declared that he would blot from his works any line which did not contain some motive to virtue, a promise which he seems to have scrupulously observed, for in none of his writings do we perceive any allusions that could give offence even to the most sensitive or affected prude.

Mr. Macaulay, in commenting upon Lord Bacon's life, has pointed out how singularly both Waller and that philosopher contrived to regain the esteem of the world, when through the baseness of their actions, they appeared to have forfeited all public respect for ever. We do not see anything remarkable in the fact, that Waller, disgraced as he was, should have recovered his original position in society—many circumstances having concurred to extenuate, or, at least, to throw

the veil of oblivion over his base-minded and dishonourable conduct. When recalled from exile, he returned patronised by Cromwell, hence the dominant faction willingly overlooked his past faults, particularly as he commended the virtues and the policy of their chief. Again, when the Restoration replaced the Cavaliers in power, the Royalist party regarded Waller as one who had formerly suffered proscription in defending their principles, hence they looked upon him rather in the light of a martyr who had suffered for their cause, than as an adversary whom they were called upon to persecute. Besides, after the recall of the Stuarts had occurred, every one, except a few of the sternest Puritans, viewed the Rebellion as a miserable interval of anarchy in which men were not altogether amenable to the usual laws of morality, and in which many faults that could not be well explained away in ordinary times, might then be considered venial and excusable. In truth, the nation appeared willing to forget the troubles of the deluge, in the joy which the subsiding of the waters had occasioned. Every one desired rather to look forward to the novelties of the future, than to contemplate or enquire into the calamities of the past.

It is idle to suppose the value or the reputation of Waller's writings would have alone sufficed to replace him in an honourable position after being guilty of such infamous tergiversation and such paltry evasions as he had practised at his trial, although the respect which society paid Bacon after his ignominious disgrace may be attributed in a great degree to the intellectual pre-eminence he had attained by his philosophic

writings. Waller no doubt owed the recovery of his reputation much to his perfect knowledge of the world, to his invariable good nature, and to the favours which he purchased by a constant distribution of the most servile and ingenious flattery that even a courtier could conceive. To suppose that he was a man of high principle or elevated sentiment is out of the question, yet as he possessed the art of making his friends believe him to be such, the counterfeit answered as well during his lifetime as the solid coin. He did not, however, wholly escape the unfavourable judgment even of contemporaries, for Clarendon has censoriously pronounced his condemnation with great bitterness of language. "There needs no more to be said to extol the excellence and power of his wit and pleasantness of his conversation, than that it was of magnitude enough to cover a world of very great faults; that is, so to cover them, that they were not taken notice of to his reproach, viz., a narrowness in his nature to the lowest degree; an abjectness and want of courage to support him in any virtuous undertaking; an insinuation and servile flattery to the height the vainest and most imperious nature could be contented with; that it preserved and won his life from those who most resolved to take it, and in an occasion when he ought to have been ambitious to have lost it; and then preserved him again from the reproach and the contempt that was due to him for so preserving it, and for vindicating it at such a price; that it had power to reconcile him to those whom he had most offended and provoked; and continued to his age with

that rare felicity, that his company was acceptable where his spirit was odious ; and he was at least pitied where he was most detested." When we have subtracted something for the animosity which Clarendon might reasonably be supposed to bear against a man by whom he had been so deeply injured, this portrait of Waller's character will be found a delineation that very closely and faithfully resembles the original. Of Waller it could never be said,

"That not for fame, but virtue's better end,
He stood the furious foe, the timid friend."

As Waller's earliest poetry was written in 1620, and his latest in 1680, it is difficult to class him with contemporary writers. When his labours commenced, Donne and Ben Jonson were still above the horizon ; before his labours had concluded, the reputation of Cowley was established, Milton's immortal work was finished, and Dryden was soaring to the very zenith of fame. After the allegorical and imaginative poets of the Elizabethan era had passed away, the classical or metaphysical poets, as they were styled, succeeded, and to this latter school Waller more particularly belongs ; for although we must admit that the sweetness of his numbers, the gracefulness of his expression, and the correctness of his taste formed a marked improvement in point of style when contrasted with the rugged metre and ridiculous hyperboles of such writers as Donne and Cowley, yet he never produced poems which for a moment entitled him to be ranked in the same category with the great writers who flourished after the Restoration—such as Milton, Dryden, and

Pope. The principal cause which conferred upon Waller during his lifetime a celebrity that he did not deserve, and that could never be permanently maintained, was the false taste of the public mind then prevailing, which preferred the obscure and pedantic crudities of writers who were more philosophers than poets, to the noble sublimity and graceful simplicity of writers who were scarce honoured with the name of poets by their contemporaries. Thus, we find Clarendon speaking of Cowley as a man who had taken a flight above all others in poetry, Rymer declaring the *Dauides* superior to the *Jerusalem* of Tasso, and Atterbury, at a later period, ranking Waller above Spenser. "Spenser," says Ben Jonson, "in affecting the ancients, writ no language; yet I would have him read for his matter, but as Virgil read Ennius." Bolton, a critic in the reign of James I., observes, "In verse, there are to furnish an English historian with copy and tongue, Spenser's Hymns, but I cannot advise his other poems for practick English, any more than I can Chaucer, Lydgate, or Skelton." In truth, so faulty and vitiated was the critical taste of the seventeenth century, that in reality those parts of Waller's writings, which in the present day are considered his blemishes and imperfections, were then esteemed by his admirers as the beauties and excellencies of his style. They praised him for adhering to the standard of the metaphysical poets, we are endeavouring to dole out to him a little credit for having partly abandoned it. .

Many circumstances contributed to alter the general

character of English poetry at the commencement of the seventeenth century. With the close of Queen Elizabeth's reign the last sunset of the romantic chivalry of feudalism may be said to have died away, for society had then fairly passed from the mediæval period, and entered the portals of modern Europe. From the grand discoveries in mechanical art, and the general expansion of maritime commerce, knowledge was universally diffusing itself over Europe, and the English nation partaking in the general improvement, had become a learned philosophic people, more inclined to reason than to indulge in the pleasures of an ex-cursive fancy. Hence they began to require their writers to put a curb on the imaginative faculty, and display a greater amount of argument in their works, for as Ben Jonson has observed, "wheresoever manners and fashions change, language changes also, it imitates the public wish." James I., full of pedantry and conceit, as well as fond of dabbling in philosophic speculations, showed no inclination to admire the allegorical poetry which had been so much in fashion during the preceding century, consequently the wits who frequented his court endeavoured to tempt him to the temple of the Muses by inventing a new style of poetry, in which the ornaments consisted either of incessant comparisons transferred from the classical writings of the ancients, or of absurd and unintelligible analogies of fancy, which left the reader in a perfect maze of doubt as to their meaning or application. It became the fashion not only to discard the allegorical machinery and excessive personification of the Spen-

serian school, but to regard the works of those masters of the poetic art as flat heresies in the creed of true taste. A new dynasty had arisen, and Donne having deposed Spenser, was acknowledged to fill the throne of poetic excellence. When these metaphysical poets had fairly succeeded in gaining possession of the public ear, critical taste in England may be considered to have descended to its nadir, an event which happened during the reign of James the First. If Waller deserve any merit, it is that he was one of the pioneers who prepared the way for his successors to depart from this mistaken track, and return once more into the open pathway of correct taste. In his writings we may frequently observe a pompous recurrence to heathen mythology, we may sometimes detect instances of the argument being so inextricably entangled in some philosophical conceit as to choke the meaning, yet taking a general view of his poetry, we may find many passages that seem to presage better things, and prove that the dawn of a more refined art was slowly breaking in upon the darkness and obscurity of false taste. The political troubles of the Great Rebellion, and the subsequent triumph of the fanatic Puritans, combined to throw poetry for a time into the dark shade of obscurity and neglect, so that in the interval which separates the commencement of the Civil War from the Restoration, the English Muse received fewer contributions than in almost any period of corresponding duration. Davenant, Cowley, Waller, and Denham were all either wandering over Europe in exile, or were distracted amidst the turbulent changes of the time,

Milton was engaged in defending the Commonwealth by writing declamatory pamphlets against its enemies, and Dryden had scarcely emerged into notice. But though during the reign of Charles I. both lyric and didactic poetry were hopelessly infected with the deadly plague of a corrupt and degenerate taste, the English Drama had escaped the poisoned taint, and still preserved the robust and healthy vigour of its youthful prime. Upon the stage the poet still contrived to hold the mirror up to nature, and paint the changing colours of human passion in a language which time has left fresh and unfaded to the present hour. The plays of Jonson, Fletcher, and Massinger, remain standards of dramatic excellence, whatever may be their faults and defects. No sooner, however, had the Puritans obtained the ascendancy, than poetry was driven from the last sanctuary, in which she could take refuge. In their pretended zeal for godliness and morality, these morose and sour-tempered bigots prohibited all dramatic representations, and stigmatised the unfortunate dramatists as agents of the Devil and unclean spirits. All genius was choked and strangled amidst the prevailing cant of the times, and it seemed for a period as though true taste had vanished, never to return. Brighter days at length arrived, for the nation, wearied with the galling and tyrannical domination of the Puritans, unanimously rose, after the death of Cromwell, to throw off a yoke which had become as odious as it was insufferable. A general revival of poetic literature followed the return of Charles II., who was hailed by common consent as the patron and protector of the Muse.

“ But above all the Muse inspired train,
 Triumph and raise their drooping heads again,
 Kind Heaven at once has in your person sent
 Their sacred judge, their guard and argument.”

The increasing intercourse between the Courts of England and France, occasioned by the Restoration, effected a marked change in public taste, as regards English literature, the works of the French writers forming models upon which a more easy and pleasing style of poetry was introduced, that gradually superseded the rugged and inharmonious versification of the metaphysical poets, and diminished their popularity. The wits whose writings had been so unduly esteemed for their classical productions, under the two first Stuarts, began to descend to their proper level. Their ingenuity failed to please—their numbers were considered tuneless—their defects began to be noticed. As Rochester profanely remarked, ‘their poetry was not of God, and therefore could not stand.’ The vivacity and animation of French manners prevailed in the Court. They were imitated by the poets, who endeavoured to reflect these imported charms in their compositions; and though the remnants of the false taste for classical ornament for a season exerted an injurious influence, a greater degree of propriety, elegance, and grace, became perceptible in literature, and showed that a revolution had been effected in taste, as well as in the State. Some slight praise may be accorded to Waller for the humble part he performed in bringing about this change; but it was not until Dryden and Pope had flourished, that English poetry regained its original strength and excellence. Waller,

for a brief period, rivalled the youthful efforts of Dryden, till the latter, putting forth his maturer strength, soared into a region where none but Milton could rise with equal wing.

Even so late as 1690, the absurd prejudice against the school of allegorical poetry was not entirely exploded ; thus, we observe, Atterbury, (a man of no mean genius) in editing Waller's collected works, delivering the following presumptuous condemnation of Spenser, in order to exalt Waller higher upon the pedestal of fame. "Waller," says he, "was indeed the parent of English verse, and the first that showed us our tongue had beauty and numbers in it. Our language owes more to him, than the French does to Cardinal Richlieu and the whole Academy. It is a surprising reflection, that between what Spenser wrote last and Waller first, there should not be above twenty years' distance ; and yet the one's language, like the money of that time, is now as current as ever—while the words of the other, like old coins, must go to an antiquary to understand their true meaning and value. Such advances may a great genius make, when it undertakes anything in earnest." We have too much reverence for Spenser to mention him in the same breath with Waller, much less to attempt a comparison between their relative merits. Spenser is one of the greatest of English poets. "His genius was not of an age, but for all time." His verse remains, and will remain, so long as the English language exists, a monument of fame. Let any one open his fairy coloured page and turn to Waller with what appetite

he may. Spenser often wrote more true poetry in a single night, than Waller did in sixty years. Compared with Waller, he is as Hyperion to a Satyr. His works have been a perpetual source of inspiration to succeeding writers.

“Hither as to their fountain other stars
Repair, and in their urns draw golden light.”

Spenser has been styled the Rubens of English poetry. We shall venture to call him the Raphael of English poetry. If he resemble Rubens, it is only with reference to the descriptive parts of allegorical art. Spenser had a more perfect conception and a finer knowledge of female character than any other poet, excepting Milton and Shakspeare. His women are spiritualized and impassioned in the highest degree.

“like Una’s angel face,
They make a sunshine in the shady place.”

The nymphs of Rubens are voluptuous, vulgar, and sensual; mere Flemish fishwomen robed in veils and wreathed with flowers. One looks at them and wonders what people see in them to admire, ‘for soul is wanting there.’ Spenser had an exalted idea of female excellence, and a most intense love of beauty. His whole life was spent in attempting to make others see what he felt. He could never rest until he

“forth had brought
The eternal brood of glory excellent.”

His imagination ‘glanced from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven.’ His fancy was a fountain fed by inexhaustible streams. The colour of his thoughts resembled a dolphin’s hue, changing and sparkling at every leap. His mode of expression may be antiquated,

but his verse retains many of those charms

“for which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.”

Who that reads the “Faery Queen,” can fail to admire the luxuriant imagery, the melancholy grace, and the pathetic sentiment visible in almost every stanza of the poem. Who that is gifted with an ear to appreciate the ethereal sweetness of poetry, can forbear to commend the melodious cadences, the nicely varied pauses, and the exquisite modulation of that stately and sounding versification, which, under Spenser’s hand, flows on in a tide of unbroken harmony, rising into pomp and dignity, when the sublimity of the subject requires it, and sinking to a plaintive and tender simplicity, when the softer passions of the soul are shadowed forth, or the gentler feelings of nature are called into action. The language of Spenser is harmony itself. It is like an instrument that requires only to be touched to breathe forth the sweetest and divinest sounds imagination can conceive, or pleasure can desire. But melodious as all must allow Spenser to be, this quality of his verse is heightened in effect by such a tender tone of pathetic feeling, every now and then mingling with the narrative, as to wake up in the mind of the reader, “thoughts which do often lie too deep for tears.” In admiring the pensive grace with which Spenser paints the gloom of adversity and the sorrows of neglect, we can scarcely bring ourselves to regret that Elizabeth was ungenerous, or that Burleigh was unkind, for if prosperity had been Spenser’s lot, how differently might the chords of his lyre have been struck. Hap-

pier he might have been amidst the festive revelries of Windsor and Richmond, but it was only when pining under a sense of injury and wrong on the solitary banks of his favourite Mulla that his harp could have given out its sweetest and most impassioned tone—

“Awake ye west winds through the lonely dale,
And Fancy to thy faery bower betake,
Even now with balmy freshness, breathes the gale,
Dimpling with downy wing the stilly lake;
Through the pale willows faltering whispers make,
And evening comes with locks bedript with dew,
On Desmond’s mouldering turrets, slowly shake
The trembling ryegrass and the harebell blue,
And ever and anon fair Mulla’s plaints renew.”

The works of the metaphysical poets are as inferior in point of beauty to the verse of Spenser, as artificial flowers are to those of nature. We look at them for a moment as curiosities, but soon perceive that they are without fragrance, and that their colours are unreal. Spenser’s poetry, on the contrary, is like a wilderness, where the variety of the foliage pleases at every step, where the farther we explore its recesses the greater are the beauties we discover, and where the humblest blossoms are often those which enchant the most. We have only to quote a passage or two from the “Faery Queen” to prove Spenser’s superiority over those writers, who in an age of false taste were permitted to tear the laurel from his brow, and appropriate it to their own. Where, for instance, through the whole range of the metaphysical school, can such poetic excellence be found as is exhibited in the following stanzas :—

“ And is there care in Heaven ? and is there love
 In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
 That may compassion of their evils move ?
 There is ; else much more wretched were the case
 Of men than beasts ; but oh, the exceeding love
 Of highest God ! that loves his creatures so,
 And all his works with mercy doth embrace,
 That blessed angels he sends to and fro
 To serve to wicked man, to stay his wicked foe.

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
 To come to succour us that succour want ;
 How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
 The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant
 Against foul fiends to aid us militant ?
 They for us fight, they watch, and duly ward,
 And round about us their bright squadrons plant,
 And all for love and nothing for reward ;
 Oh, why should heavenly God to men have such regard ! ”

Or, again, the description of Hope, in the “ Masque of Cupid ”—

“ With him went Hope in rank, a handsome maid,
 Of cheerful look and lovely to behold ;
 In silken samite she was light arrayed,
 And her fair locks were woven up in gold ;
 She always smiled, and in her hand did hold
 An holy water sprinkled dipt in dew,
 With which she sprinkled favours manifold,
 On whom she list and did great liking shew,
 Great liking unto many, but true love to few.”

If this is not poetry, where shall poetry be found ?
 Assuredly not in the pages of Donne, of Cowley, or
 of Waller. He who asserts that Spenser was not a
 poet, may shut up the Muses’ book—it is not for him
 to judge of poetry or taste.

Burke once in conversation observed to a friend,
 that Lord Chatham’s sister used to say her brother

knew nothing whatever except Spenser's Faery Queen — 'and,' continued Burke, 'no matter how that was said, for whoever relishes and reads Spenser as he ought to be read, will have a strong hold of the English language.'

In the poetic constellation Waller's name is an orb of such inferior magnitude, as to be seldom visible, except to the eye of the student or the antiquarian. The light of his fame grows fainter and fainter as time progresses. His writings are rarely quoted or referred to. His poems, which were once in the boudoir of every lady of fashion and the library of every wit, now only lie as neglected and obscure relics of curiosity in the heterogeneous collections of book-worms. They are buried in the tomb of the Capulets. Artists do not care to illustrate them. Critics do not enquire for them. Publishers would sooner think of reprinting Hawe's "Pastime of Pleasure," or Lydgate's "Temple of Glass," than of raising Waller's verses from the dead in a new edition. 'After life's fitful fever they sleep well.'

It was the misfortune of Waller that he lived an age too soon. He should rather have succeeded than preceded Dryden and Pope; for if he had written after these models were set up, instead of before they were in existence, we think he might have attained a far more pure and correct style. He fell, like the seed mentioned in the Parable, among brambles and thorns instead of upon good ground. He had not, like Dryden, the strength and originality of mind to perceive the errors into which he had been led, or to improve

and mature his judgment by experience. Boileau remarked that it is one of the chief characteristics of a man of genius, that his works please every one but himself. This observation, however, will not help Waller much, for he was perhaps one of the most vain and self-satisfied writers in the whole generation of poets.

Waller has attempted to succeed in two very different classes of poetry. He sometimes affects to be serious, in which he generally fails; at others, to be sprightly in which he more frequently succeeds. His Muse is exceedingly lavish and prodigal in dispensing panegyric compliments to the great. He is never so grand as when heroes are to be celebrated for their valour, or princesses for their virtues.

"No satyr stalks within the hallowed ground,
But queens and heroines, kings and gods abound,
Glory, and love, and arms, are all the sound."

He too often supposes that exaggeration produces sublimity, and that pomposity represents dignity. As he can seldom condescend to be natural, so he is rarely graceful. In the use of his celestial and mythological metaphors he is so profuse, that the reader is often puzzled to discover whether the subjects of his eulogy dwell on the earth, in the heaven, or in the waters under the earth. He is one of those writers who always have a consolation on their lips; if his elegies refer to the death of the aged, he finds comfort in the idea that they have enjoyed all the pleasures of life, if he lament over those who die in youth, he takes occasion to point out the manifold ills and vexations they

have escaped. He has an antidote for every sorrow, and a balm for every wound. But his chief delight consists in flattering his friends, by offering up perpetual oblations of praise to their merits. Like the Princess in the fable, he never speaks without precious stones falling from his mouth. Commendation, when used so constantly and indiscriminately as it was by him, loses, it must be confessed, somewhat of its value. Diamonds are only esteemed on account of their rarity, if they were as plentiful as pebbles we should scarce stoop to pick them up.

A single anecdote sometimes gives a great insight into character, and leads to the exposure of defects which would otherwise have passed unobserved. One is related of Waller, which goes far to prove that the sincerity of his numerous encomiums is very questionable. Some verses which the Duchess of Newcastle had written upon the Death of a Stag being shown to Waller, he declared that he would give up all his own compositions to have written them. Such a costly sacrifice (for Waller was deemed the Pope of his day) excited surprise in the minds of those he was addressing, and induced them to ask him if he really meant so. "Why," said Waller, "nothing was too much to be given that a lady might be saved from the disgrace of such a vile performance." This ironical compliment is pardonable enough, for who could tell a lady that her verses were indifferent; but *ex uno disce omnes*, and we are too often inclined after reading Waller's Panegyrics, to say as Hamlet did to Polonius, in the play, 'Words, words, words.'

In several of Waller's earlier poems, the most glaring instances of defective taste may be observed, and such as the merest tyro would have contrived to avoid. What for example can be more absurd than these lines in the Poem on the repair of St. Paul's.

"How private bounty could so far extend,
The King built all, but Charles the western end;
So proud a fabric to devotion given,
At once it threatens and obliges Heaven."

Or in the Poem on the Navy, when he informs the King that with his new ships he need fear no more invasions from the Moors—

"Thy dreadful fleet would style thee Lord of all,
And ride in triumph o'er the drowned ball."

The fertility of the Summer Islands, according to Waller's account, is such as an English farmer of the present day may well look upon with envy.

"Such is the mould, that the blest tenant feeds
On precious fruits and pays his rent in weeds."

What Dryden said of Settle will often apply equally to Waller.

"Free from all meaning, whether good or bad,
And in one word heroically mad,
He was too warm on picking work to dwell,
But faggoted his notions as they fell,
And if they rhymed and rattled all was well."

The Panegyric on Cromwell is indisputably the best of Waller's poetical writings, both as regards cohesiveness of argument and propriety of ornament. The language of the poem is sounding and majestic, without degenerating into rant and bombast. The digressions are few, and not altogether inopportunately introduced. The imagery harmonises well with the subject,

and shows that the writer could sometimes display an elegant and chaste fancy. The versification is for the most part correct, smooth, and melodious. "Such a series of verses," says Dr. Johnson, "had rarely appeared before in the English language. Of these lines, some are grand, some are graceful, and all are musical. There is now and then a trifling thought or a feeble verse, but its great fault is the choice of its hero." It is perhaps as good a poem as a man could write who was devoid of sensibility, and strikingly deficient in imaginative power. Waller always owed his popularity more to sound than sense. His ear was much better educated than his mind. He could not delineate passion, or represent the transports of the heart. As he never feels very deeply himself, so he never makes others feel deeply either. He does not seem to have profited by the Horatian precept, "*Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum tibi ipsi.*"

Waller's success in praising Cromwell may be partly attributed to the fact, that the Protector's career furnished materials much more suitable to the grandeur and sublimity of serious verse than did the more obscure and common-place qualities of many others, whose actions he attempted to celebrate. There was much to be said in favour of a man who had done such signal service to his countrymen as Cromwell had, in restoring order when the state appeared condemned to a hopeless and interminable anarchy, and who by his warlike energy had made the name of England feared, where during the reign of the two first Stuarts it had been insulted and despised.

* The poem is
as a whole very
good and com-

the poem is
a very good
one and com-

Another cause of the superiority of this poem over the rest of Waller's writings, may be referred to the altered structure of the versification he adopted, in this instance, by selecting Davenant's Gondibert for his model. In the ordinary heroic measure, it was possible to expand an idea over ten or twelve lines, but in the quatrain it became imperative upon the writer to condense the thought in such a manner, as to bring it to a point at the termination of the fourth line. A restraint so constant and insuperable produced a terseness and conciseness of expression very superior to that rambling feeble style of writing, which the larger license of the heroic stanza encouraged and permitted. We have only to compare the Panegyric with some of Waller's earlier poems, to observe, at a glance, the superiority of the former in reference to concentration of thought and vigour of language. Thus, the allusion to the advantages which England derives from her insular position, for the encouragement of maritime commerce, shows that Waller was sometimes able to display both spirit and skill in his verse—

“ Our little world, the image of the great,
Like that amidst the boundless ocean set,
Of her own growth hath all that nature craves,
And all that's rare as tribute from the waves.

As Egypt does not on the clouds rely,
But to the Nile owes more than to the sky,
So what our earth and what our heaven denies
Our ever constant friend the sea supplies.

The taste of hot Arabia's spice we know,
Free from the scorching sun that makes it grow ;
Without the worm, in Persian silks we shine
And, without planting, drink of every wine.

To dig for wealth we weary not our limbs,
 Gold, though the heaviest metal, hither swims;
 Ours is the harvest where the Indians mow,
 We plough the deep, and reap what others sow "

The lines on Cromwell's administrative genius are animated and happily expressed—

" But when your troubled country called you forth
 Your flaming courage and your matchless worth,
 Dazzling the eyes of all that did pretend,
 To fierce contention gave a prosperous end.

Still as you rise the state exalted too
 Finds no distemper while 'tis changed by you;
 Changed like the world's great scene! when without noise
 The rising sun night's vulgar lights destroys.

Illustrious acts high raptures do infuse,
 And every conqueror creates a muse.
 Here in low strains your milder deeds we sing,
 But there, my Lord! we'll bays and olive bring

To crown your head; while you in triumph ride
 O'er vanquished nations and the sea beside,
 While all your Neighbour Princes unto you
 Like Joseph's sheaves pay reverence and bow.

Mr. Hallam in speaking of Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*, makes the following comment: "In spite of much bad taste, it may be doubted whether so continued a strain of poetry could at that time be found in the language. Waller's *Panegyric* and Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, the most celebrated poems of the age, are very inferior to it." To dispute the decision of such an eminent authority may appear presumptuous, but we cannot help thinking this judgment was rather hastily delivered. One of the chief characteristics of Dryden's genius was the slow and patient manner in which he corrected his taste and eschewed the errors

of that corrupt style which he had acquired during his youth. Now the *Annus Mirabilis* was written in the very dawn of his career, when he not only approved of the vicious affectations of the metaphysical poets, but eagerly attempted to imitate them in all their absurdities and conceits. If the evidence were not very substantive, one could hardly credit that Dryden wrote such inflated nonsense, even in his youth; and it may very well be questioned whether after composing Alexander's feast, he would not gladly have blotted the *Annus Mirabilis* from his works. The only possible merit that can be claimed for it as a poem, is the correctness and harmony of its versification. A more incongruous collection of incidents were surely never grouped together either before or since. The descriptive parts often descend to such minute details of common-place life, as to be totally incompatible with the idea of poetry; details which no genius could possibly make poetical, or invest with that natural dignity which is essential to art. He must have a potent fancy who can describe the calking of a ship's bottom, or the refitting of sails in a dockyard with effect.

"So here some pick out bullets from the side,
Some drive old oakum through each seam and rift;
Their left hand does the calking iron guide,
The rattling mallet with the right they lift."

A shipwright would have described this in prose much more poetically. Even where the subject is propitious for sublimity of expression the failure is more complete, thus—

"To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
 Angels draw wide the curtains of the skies,
 And Heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
 For tapers made two glaring comets rise."

As though the firmament were regulated like a gasometer. Dr. Johnson has selected as a favourable specimen of this poem the following verse—

"Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
 And now their odours armed against them fly;
 Some preciously by shattered porcelain fall,
 And some by aromatic splinters die."

Dryden's description here more closely resembles the falling of a large jar in a chemist's shop than a naval battle. Having quoted some of the worst absurdities which disfigure the piece, we shall in candour add one of its most natural and perfect verses.

"The ghosts of traitors from the bridge descend
 With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice;
 About the fire into a dance they bend,
 And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice."

Our readers must estimate for themselves the comparative merits of the three poems, but we venture to think some will concur with us in deeming Cooper's Hill as far superior to the Panegyric as the Panegyric is to the Annus Mirabilis.

Of all the literary fashions imported from France after the Restoration, none could have been so well dispensed with as the application of rhyme to dramatic poetry. Upon its indigenous soil, even under the culture of such master minds as Corneille and Racine, the rhyming play when acted often proved a very tame and spiritless representation of ideal passion, but when it became adopted by such inferior writers as Shadwell

and Davenant, the effect produced by their efforts more frequently approached the ridiculous than the sublime. Even Dryden never wrote a good tragedy till he abandoned rhyme and expressed his thoughts in blank verse. So generally, however, did public taste run in favour of this dramatic innovation during the reign of Charles II., that the playwrights not content with constructing new works in imitation of the French model, proceeded to lay sacrilegious hands upon the plays of Shakspeare and Fletcher, by turning the eloquent language of those writers into rhyming verse. Nothing was then deemed worthy of the name of poetry, unless it jingled in rhyme, although in reality the blank verse of such writers as Milton or Shakspeare is occasionally in happy passages as musical as any rhyme that was ever written. Waller, however, did not think so, for in an epilogue to one of these disgraceful transformations of the old writers, he went so far as to censure Shakspeare and others for not employing rhyme,

"Nor is't less strange such mighty wits as those
Should use a style in tragedy like prose."

To such an extent did these literary Vandals proceed with their mutilations, that the works of the Elizabethan dramatists stood in danger of being irreparably blemished and defaced. In truth, it would hardly have been more preposterous to have called a common sign painter from the street to retouch the features painted by Kneller and Lely, than to have commissioned such dramatists as Nahum Tate and Davenant to remodel the delicate creations of Shakspeare and Fletcher. One cannot but regret that Dryden should

have condescended to take part in some of these wretched displays of vitiated taste. Thus we find him in conjunction with Davenant altering the *Tempest*, although, as he has elsewhere confessed, his hand was very unfit to deal with the fairy world of such delicate elves as Ariel, or even with such exquisite conceptions of feminine perfection as the chaste Miranda,—

“Shakspeare’s magic could not copied be;
Within that circle none durst walk but he.”

Waller, who was always jealous of being outstripped by his brother wits, undertook to alter Fletcher’s play of the *Maid’s Tragedy*, so as to make the conclusion of the piece less tragical. According to Fletcher, in the original plot, a profligate and licentious monarch meets with a justly retributive punishment for the seduction of an innocent woman, but since the Court of Charles II. could not witness the performance of this tragedy without certain uncomfortable fears lest the moral might be applied both to themselves and their royal master, Waller, courtier-like, volunteered to turn the fifth act into rhyme, and save the life of Fletcher’s King. Not satisfied with this, he effected a second alteration, and rescued Amintor and Aspasia, apologising in the epilogue for what he had done, by making the King say,

“When next we act this tragedy again,
Unless you like the change, we shall be slain.
Excess of love was heretofore the cause,
Now if we die ’tis want of your applause.”

Some excuse may be offered for Waller in this instance, because the play in its original state was actually prohibited by the Master of the Revels as improper to be

represented in public. Courtiers did not deem it decorous to whisper to the conscience of royalty, that

“on lustful kings

Unlooked for sudden deaths from heaven are sent.”

Atterbury, in attempting to justify Waller's alteration of Fletcher's plot, observes, “The play was altered to please the Court; it is not to be doubted who sat for the characters of the Two Brothers. It was agreeable to the sweetness of Mr. Waller's temper to soften the rigour of the Tragedy as he expresses it; but whether it be so agreeable to the nature of Tragedy itself to make everything come off so easily, I leave to the critics.” This apology is sufficient to condemn Waller, for it leads us to perceive at once, that the sweetness of Mr. Waller's temper meant nothing more or less than the servility of Mr. Waller's nature. As to the fact of his being so much moved by the Tragedy that he could not bear to witness the proper punishment of the guilty persons there represented, it is mere affectation. People who have such sweet tempers, should avoid being present at tragedies, or, at least, abstain from reversing the fundamental laws of justice, in order to save their pocket handkerchiefs. Indeed, the manner in which the theatre was prostituted at this period to disguise the vices of the English Court, forms a lasting disgrace to those who cultivated and presided over dramatic art. The *dramatis personæ* were put upon the stage, not ‘to show virtue her own features and scorn her own image,’ but to pander to the follies and foibles of a libertine prince and his companions. If by accident a cutting sarcasm slipped from the

author's pen, it was effectually blotted out by the Censor, who refused his assent to every sentiment which could in any degree be considered offensive to the sensitive ear of royalty, or unpleasant to the tender consciences of those parasites and flatterers whose virtue was bartered in exchange for the venal rewards of court favour. Yet at this very period the grossness and indelicacy of the language employed on the stage exceeds anything that was ever written either before or since; while the plots of the dramas were often so constructed as to bring adulterers in triumph to the fifth act, and leave the audience more disposed to applaud the gallantry of the seducer than to sympathise with the misfortune of his victim. Evelyn, whose opinions were certainly not tainted by any remnant of the puritanical cant which had preceded the Restoration, expressed his disgust in strong terms at the degraded condition of the drama under Charles II. Thus, after seeing one of Dryden's plays, he remarks in his diary, "A foolish plot, and very profane; it affected me to see how much the stage was degenerated and polluted by the licentious times."

In the lighter departments of amatory poetry, Waller occasionally rises from mediocrity to elegance. The more trifling the subject to his view when engaged in its composition, the better he succeeds, and it may be safely affirmed that those poems which he regarded as the desultory amusements of his leisure hours are in general far superior to those on which he lavished a greater degree of labour, with the idea of rendering them the corner-stone of his fame. In these minor

compositions, his numbers are generally musical, and his images, if they do not always please, at least seldom offend. He sometimes displays, it is true, considerable affectation, yet he treats of amatory passion with more delicacy of touch than many of his contemporaries. He introduces the subject of love too frequently, but in this fault he is by no means singular, for as Cowley, when apologising on behalf of the rhyming craft, observes, "Poets are scarcely thought freemen of their company without paying some duties, or obliging themselves to be true to love." In Waller's verse the reader will find nothing approaching to the humorous or the burlesque, so that we may suppose he considered the use of such adjuncts beneath the dignity of his Muse. At the same time, he is never malevolent, or wantonly inclined to hurt the feelings of others.

"Plenteous of native wit, in lettered ease,
Politely formed to profit and to please.
To Fame, he gave whate'er was due to Fame,
And what he could not praise, forgot to name.
Thus Eden's rose without a thorn displayed
Her bloom, and in a fragrant blush decayed."

In conveying flattery to the fair sex, he often eminently excels, and it is easy to imagine that his efforts were not unrewarded by those to whom the voice of admiration is seldom unacceptable.

"Let but the ladies smile and they are blest."

Like the Pedlar in the *Winter's Tale*, 'he has songs for man or woman of all sizes, no milliner can so fit his customers with gloves; he has the prettiest love songs for maids; and ribands of all the colours i' the rainbow.'

One of the gallants in the *Spectator*, famed for the number of his female admirers, upon being asked how he acquired such supreme influence over the sex, told his companions that when any of the ladies asked him who was the reigning favourite, he informed her that a picture of his lover was always to be found inside the lid of his snuff-box. The lady of course insisted on seeing the box, which when opened by her, presented a small mirror, where she beheld her own face. Waller used his verse very much like the mirror, for when prompted by a lady's request, the beauty of her features and the charms of her person were generally reflected from his page.

Many of Waller's minor pieces deserve a better fate than to perish in the ephemeral pages of a scrap book. The lines on a Girdle express a graceful compliment,

"A narrow compass! and yet there
Dwelt all that's good and all that's fair,
Give me but what that riband bound,
Take all the rest, the sun goes round."

The friendship between Amoret and Sacharissa is thus tastefully alluded to—

"Not the silver doves that fly,
Yoked to Cytherea's car;
Not the wings that lift so high,
And convey her son so far,

Are so lovely, sweet, and fair,
Or do more ennobled love,
Are so choicely matched a pair,
Or with more consent do move."

In the following simile Waller has been copied by Lord Byron—

"That eagle's fate and mine were one,
Which on the shaft that made him die
Espied a feather of his own,
Wherewith he wont to soar so high."

Of the few gems we have been enabled to gather from the sands of this poetic Pactolus, the following song is one of the most rare and precious. It is perhaps as chaste and perfect a poem as Waller ever wrote.

"Go lovely rose!
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired,
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die! that she,
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share,
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!"

If Waller had often written thus, we could praise him more. This comparison has been abundantly imitated, as in the following stanza,

"Come forth, fair lady, from thy lone retreat,
And to the world thy varied charms disclose;
Come forth, while on thy cheek the blush so sweet,
In all the grace of virgin beauty glows,
Lest thou be like the solitary rose,
That in the wild wood bloometh quite unseen,
And to the desert all its fragrance throws;
On whose gay tints no mortal eye hath been—
Lo! see how soon the worm shall spoil its damask sheen."

Gray also has used it—

“Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

The poem addressed to Lady Lucy Sidney, the sister of Sacharissa, is an agreeable and pretty effusion.

“Yes, fairest blossom! do not slight
That age which you may know so soon,
The rosy morn resigns her light
And milder glory to the noon.
And then what wonders shall you do
Whose dawning beauty warms us so?
Hope waits upon the flowery prime:
And summer though it be less gay,
Yet is not looked on as a time
Of declination and decay.
For with a full hand that does bring
All that was promised by the spring.”

Upon taking a general view of Waller's works, we think he is more entitled to be styled a versifier than a poet. He appears neither to have been endowed with ‘the imagination all compact,’ nor to have been gifted with the abundant riches of a copious fancy. His lays are too often such

“as neither ebb nor flow,
Correctly cold and regularly low.
That shunning faults one quiet tenor keep,
We cannot blame indeed—but we may sleep.”

He was, however, the pride and boast of his generation, ‘the admired of all admirers,’ and those who may censure us for attempting to hang this slight garland upon the broken monument of his fame, should recollect that Dryden once said of him, “I mention him for honour's sake, and am desirous of laying hold of his memory on all occasions; and thereby acknowledging to the world that unless he had written none of us could write.”

WILLIAM COLLINS.

“ Let the artist share
The palm ; he shares the peril and dejected,
Faints o’er the labour unapproved—alas !
Despair and genius ! ”—

‘AUTHORS,’ said Lord Bacon, ‘are the servants of posterity,’ and to none will this remark apply with such force as to the subject of the following memoir.

It is a singular fact in the history of literature, that many works have been very falsely estimated as to their real value by contemporary criticism, the authors in some instances, acquiring honours wholly unmerited, in others, being defrauded of that fame to which they were justly entitled. The neglect of one age is, however, often amply atoned for by the admiration of the next, while the lavish applause which has been too liberally bestowed by the patronage of friends and dependents, frequently fails even to raise a feeble echo from posterity. Imperfect and erroneous as may be the verdicts that are thus occasionally delivered in the tribunals of critical taste, time always furnishes an oracle by appealing to which a correct judgment may be obtained. *Nec si quid olim lusit Anacreon, delevit ætas.* A century sweeps away the animosities of jealousy and the prejudices of faction, the errors of false

taste and the caprices of fashion. The reputation of an author then comes to be tried solely with reference to the qualities of his writings, his merits and defects are placed in opposite scales, and the balance is lifted by an even and impartial hand. Neither the generosity of friendship nor the malice of envy can exert any influence. Flattery and detraction have alike lost their power. Political considerations and personal predilections become too faint to bias the reasoning, or sway the judgment of the public, and an estimate is formed which succeeding ages seldom find occasion to reverse. Eccentric individuals desirous of notoriety may be found presumptuous enough to assert that Pope was no poet, Marlborough no general, and Walpole no statesman, but such persons usually only form the leaders of a miserable and contemptible minority. Amidst the general clamour of applause, the feeble sounds of their dissentient voices are scarcely heard.

In the laboratory of time, the process of refining is carried on with remarkable circumspection and care. Nothing that is intrinsically valuable is allowed to perish. Nothing that is wholly worthless is preserved. From this crucible the golden ore of genius comes forth with renewed brightness, while the spurious alloy of mediocrity gets obscured and defaced for ever. To the multitude of writers, age is surely fatal; for no devices, however ingenious, can preserve the gilded leaves of an artificial reputation from the moth of oblivion. To the chosen few, from whom the rays of genius have fallen, futurity does but serve to brighten the lustre of their fame.

“ Whose honours with increase of ages grow,
As streams roll down enlarging as they flow.”

In the last century, while the Odes of Collins lay neglected in a few solitary copies on the bookstalls of Grub Street, Pomfret's Choice might be found in the library of almost every gentleman in England; but who would now think of preferring Pomfret to Collins. Hervey's Meditations for a season attained a wider popularity than did Addison's Spectator, yet Hervey's affected moralists are forgotten, while Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley enjoys a title that will scarce become extinct till the English language shall have ceased to be read. The fame of Addison and Collins continues to increase—that of Hervey and Pomfret to diminish. The materials which the architects of one generation almost rejected, have now become the cornerstones of the building, the most graceful columns of the temple.

“ Time the corrector where our judgments err.”

William Collins was born in the city of Chichester, December 25th, 1720, where his father carried on the business of a hatter. His family appear to have been of reputable standing, and there is some reason to suppose that his mother could boast of good descent. At cathedral towns in England, a custom formerly prevailed with many respectable tradesmen to make great sacrifices in favour of a particular child, when they observed any precocious ability, by sending him to one of the public universities; so that in looking over the list of English worthies, it is no uncommon circumstance to find their origin derived from parents occupying the

very humblest walks of life. This free admission of all classes to the public schools and universities, without reference to family or birth, has been one of the principal means of keeping English society in a wholesome condition, and we trust it ever will remain the crowning glory of those institutions, that their gates shall be thrown as widely open to the industry and merit of the humblest student, as to the more conspicuous claims of opulence and rank. Indeed, nothing can more plainly bespeak an ungenerous disposition, or great meanness of mind, than a paltry attempt to speak disparagingly of a man of genius, because his family happen to have been obscure, for if he has raised himself from a very inferior condition, by dint of ability and perseverance, it surely ought rather to show to his advantage than to his prejudice.

At an early age, Collins was admitted as a scholar of Winchester college, and subsequently elected upon the foundation to New College in Oxford. His tutor, Dr. Burton, observing his rapid proficiency in learning, and uncommon talent, contrived to obtain for him an admission to Magdalen College, as a demy, in July, 1741. He remained at the university until he had taken a Bachelor's degree, when he suddenly left, without having, so far as can be ascertained, any particular object in view, except the pursuit of literary fame.

Collins appears to have began to sin very early in life, for we find him at the age of sixteen writing some verses 'To a Lady weeping,' in the Gentleman's Magazine. Before quitting College, the direction of his ambition was unalterably turned towards the cultiva-

tion of poetic composition—a study which, perhaps, of all others, unfits a man, whose pecuniary resources are limited, for rising in the world. It now became but too evident that he was one of those

“whom Phœbus in his ire,
Had blasted with poetic fire;”

for he not only wrote but published an Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer on his edition of Shakspeare, and those elegant poems known as the Oriental Eclogues. These productions, though not altogether overlooked at Oxford, failed to raise the author to any sensible elevation on the Mount of Parnassus.

In the year 1744, Collins went to London with the idea of obtaining a livelihood by enlisting in the ranks of literary adventure, but the times were sadly unpropitious for such an enterprise, even if he had possessed the energy and resolution necessary to procure success. To youthful *literati* the metropolis always appears an El Dorado where they are likely to turn stones into gold, and Collins was one of those whose imagination too often pictured a brighter future than it was probable time would realise. Independent of the capital being a position favourable for the avocation of literature from the facilities it offers to the student in the shape of public libraries, the opportunity of enjoying there the society of persons whose views are similar and whose tastes are congenial, forms no slight inducement to draw men of letters to its busy crowd. Dr. Johnson considered no scenery in the world comparable to the foggy gloom of a November day in Fleet Street; and Lord Falkland, the delight of his age, used to

confess that quitting London was the only thing he was not sufficiently master of himself to manage without a struggle.

When Collins appeared in London (1744) as a candidate for poetic fame, the golden age of literary patronage had almost passed away, and general knowledge not being then sufficiently diffused among the middle classes of society to form a reading public, authors were left upon the barren and sterile soil of neglect. During the reign of Queen Anne, the reputation of a man of letters had been regarded as a passport to the very highest offices of the state, and had conferred upon its possessor the privilege of entering the most exclusive society of the time. To be acknowledged an author of mark, was then something like having been created a Prince, for honours, distinctions, and rewards, flowed in upon the fortunate candidate with such profusion, as scarcely to be credited now, if not authenticated by history. Addison was a Secretary of State. Stepney and Prior were deputed ambassadors to some of the principal European Courts. Gay was a secretary of legation. Locke, a Commissioner of the Board of Trade, and Newton, Master of the Mint. Ambrose Philips obtained an appointment as Secretary to the Chancellor, and Rowe fulfilled the singularly dissimilar duties of Poet Laureate and Land Surveyor of the Customs. The ministry, whether Whig or Tory, vied in dispensing a lavish profusion of sinecure offices upon literary men, and found themselves on some occasions compelled to pay an almost obsequious homage to the wits of the

day. "I value myself," said Swift, "upon making the Ministry desire an acquaintance with Parnell and not Parnell with the Ministry;" and several noblemen expressed themselves as being deeply mortified because Pope paid as much attention in company to Swift and Gay as he did to them. Nor was this extraordinary influence which literary men then commanded confined to the extravagant rewards of ministerial patronage, for a poet considered himself almost degraded if united to a lady of less rank than the daughter or the widow of a peer. Dryden married Lady Elizabeth Howard; Addison, the Countess of Warwick; and Young, Lady Elizabeth Lee, the daughter of the Earl of Lichfield.

Upon the accession of the House of Hanover, this exaggerated estimation of the importance of literary men was exchanged for an equally unjustifiable neglect of their legitimate claims, and the stream of patronage which had occasioned such fertility from its overflowing profusion, became so suddenly dried up, that the very excess of its former bounty caused its absence to be the more severely felt. Neither George I. or George II. were sufficiently acquainted with the English language to take any interest in the literature of their adopted kingdom, and being exceedingly ill educated, they felt more pleasure in the society of a few parasitical flatterers than in the conversation of those wits who had graced the salons of their predecessors. George I. frankly admitted that he hated painting and poetry, while his son delighted much more in the company of such a vulgar woman as the Countess of Yarmouth, than in conversing with learned men. Walpole, in

point of taste, was equally coarse and unrefined, frequently descending in his humorous moments to actual obscenity. He might occasionally quote Horace in the House of Commons, but he never proved a *Macænas* to the generation of needy writers that pined and sickened under his observation. He had contrived a more effectual method for obtaining a majority in the Parliament than by employing political writers to explain his views or to defend his policy. He had discovered that a bribe often succeeded where the best of arguments failed. 'Every man,' said he, 'has his price,' and acting upon this maxim, he purchased the votes of his opponents with a most unscrupulous boldness. Accordingly, instead of following the footsteps of his predecessors, he drew off the supplies which had been formerly lavished upon authors, and applied them to mercenary purposes of corruption and intrigue. He cared little for books and still less for their writers. The only poet he ever pensioned, was Young—the only wit he ever condescended to notice, was Pope.

Just at the period when Walpole fell from the height of power, Collins arrived in London to try his fortunes in the literary world, and never did poet chose a more unfavourable season for so delicate an experiment. There were scarce half-a-dozen men of eminent and acknowledged reputation in the whole republic of letters. Pope was dying. Young's fame was but partially established. Johnson was gaining a position by hard fighting, and Thomson depended on a pension from the Prince of Wales. The rest were

struggling against all the vicissitudes of poverty, and the privations of want, wandering about houseless in the streets or subjected to the miseries of a jail. If they were fortunate to obtain a few guineas by chance for some of their productions, the money was at once improvidently spent in rioting and dissipation until exhausted, when they returned to their garrets to suffer again from the pangs of hunger, and to shiver from the inclemency of the weather. To be dependent upon literature as a means of support, was, at this period, synonymous with a life of beggary. Men of eminent ability were obliged to make the most degrading shifts to obtain the common necessities of life, and it was no unusual circumstance for them to pawn their clothes for a loaf of bread, and their books for a night's lodging. Sometimes they were reduced to such extremities, as to be compelled to sleep in a bulk, or in the ashes of a glass house. "In this manner," says Dr. Johnson, "was to be found the author of 'The Wanderer,' the man of exalted sentiments, extensive views, and curious observations; the man whose remarks on life might have assisted the statesman, and whose ideas of virtue might have enlightened the moralist." Even the most industrious writers could get nothing but a miserable pittance, which, with the greatest providence and thrift, scarcely served to keep them secure from the invasions of the bailiff and the dun. Publishers reaped the profits of literature, such as they were, and lived in opulence and splendour, while authors were treated with contempt and left to starve. Johnson wrote *Rasselas* to pay for his mother's funeral, and had such an in-

different wardrobe, that when invited to dine with Cave, at St. John's Gate, he was obliged to sit away from the other guests behind a screen. Thomson, when asked about his affairs, used to reply, that they were in a poetical posture. Fielding was twice arrested for debt. Savage died in prison.

As the slight resources which Collins obtained from his friends soon proved insufficient for his maintenance, he made some attempts to increase them by undertaking several literary works. Among his numerous projects, one was a History of the Revival of Learning, another, the Life of Leo X., but these designs were successively abandoned after very slight efforts, owing to his irresolution and want of perseverance. Possibly he had not the means of obtaining the information necessary for works like these, which could not be compiled without access to an extensive collection of materials. He next planned several tragedies, a task in every respect unsuitable to his genius, which delighted rather to sport in the visionary realms of an ideal world, than to analyse, or depict the passions and feelings of actual life. From time to time he wrote various poems, many of which, owing to his fastidious taste, were destroyed as soon as completed. His Odes, which now form the glory of his fame, were published in 1746, by Miller, and met with even less success than his juvenile productions at college. He now became so disheartened at the failure of his literary plans, and so reduced in circumstances, that his energies entirely forsook him and left him a prey to melancholy and despair. 'Slow rises worth by poverty depressed.' In this condition he

was visited by Dr. Johnson, who with great kindness of feeling, contrived to procure a sum of money, on the credit of a translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*, an assistance which enabled him to escape from the country, and take refuge on the continent.

This unfortunate reverse would probably have happened to Collins, even if the age in which he lived had given a more liberal encouragement to literary pursuits. It is idle to blame the public for not discerning the beauty of his writings, since the general character of his poetry is of that delicate nature which can rarely be properly appreciated, except by 'the fit though few.' The world could have no interest in slighting the claims of such a man, or in refusing to acknowledge the power of his genius. Society is not to be censured because critics were obtusely dull, and observed silence where they should have bestowed praise. Injudicious opinions respecting the merits of poetry were not confined to the generation that treated the works of Collins with neglect. Locke regarded all poets, except Milton, when placed in comparison with Sir Richard Blackmore, as mere ballad makers, and many persons at the present day consider the *Lake Poets*

"To rival all but Shakspeare's name below."

Yet no one is bound to accept such decisions as final and irreversible. The discrimination of critics in the middle of the eighteenth century, was certainly not very penetrating or correct. Smollett designated Glover's *Leonidas* as the glory of George the Second's reign, and Paul Whitehead stood in far higher esti-

mation with contemporaries than did Collins; yet Glover is now scarce heard of, and Whitehead would be forgotten if Churchill had not canonized his dullness in that terse couplet,

“ May I, (can worse disgrace on manhood fall)
Be born a Whitehead and baptized a Paul.”

The poetry of Collins was never likely to attain popularity in the vulgar sense of the word, for he seldom wrote anything ‘that came home to men’s business and bosoms,’ or that could interest the multitude of readers. His admirers must always be confined to a narrow circle, and even if the merit of his poems had been fully acknowledged on their first publication, such works could never have yielded a remuneration sufficient to maintain him without farther exertion in the more profitable departments of literary labour.

Shortly after his retirement to the continent, Collins was enriched by a legacy of £2,000, from his uncle, Colonel Martin, who had died while serving with the army in Germany. Such a bequest, with ordinary frugality, ought to have rendered him independent, and enabled him to direct his abilities to those particular studies in which he was naturally fitted to excel. Riches, however, cannot purchase happiness where the mind is not at rest. With the money he returned to England, having previously determined to fix his residence in London—but his views were unsettled and often changed. To his honour it may be mentioned that he now repaid the booksellers what they had advanced upon credit, and also reimbursed Millar for the loss that had been sustained by the failure of the Odes.

The translation of Aristotle he either never began or soon neglected.

It might be anticipated that this accession of fortune would have rendered Collins happy, but it came too late to be of much service, for disease had already made such inroads upon his health that the remainder of his life proved little else than one dreary blank of vacuity and gloom. Melancholy is a calamity to which the whole family of literary men are peculiarly liable, and, perhaps, scarcely any of the finest intellects have altogether escaped without more or less falling under the influence of this dreadful malady. Johnson felt a constant dread that insanity would be his fate. Swift entertained a similar notion, for being once observed gazing at an elm, the upper branches of which were withered, his friends asked what he was looking at. 'I shall be like that tree,' said the Dean, 'I shall die at the top.' Smollett could write nothing for a year and a half from continued depression of spirits. Hume consulted physicians, who told him to apply less and to ride more; while Pope gave way so entirely to an attack of *coma vigil*, that he sat down calmly in daily expectation of death.

Soon after his return to England, Collins was assailed by a confirmed attack of this distressing disorder; and being advised to travel in the hopes of thus removing it, he passed into France, where he remained for an interval; but finding no relief from the change of scene, he came back to Chichester and resided with his sister in that city. His literary friends continued to visit him from time to time, until his disease

amounted to an entire aberration of the mental faculties. In 1754 it became necessary to place him under slight restraint— a circumstance which Johnson has thus alluded to in a letter to Warton. “ How little can we venture to exult in any intellectual powers or literary attainments, when we see the fate of poor Collins. I knew him a few years ago, full of hopes, full of projects, versed in many languages, high in fancy, and strong in retention. This busy and forcible mind is now under the government of those who lately would not have been able to comprehend the least and most narrow of its designs.” The mind of Collins had too much fine silver in its composition to bear the rough usage of adversity and neglect. He knew the merit of his poems too well not to feel discouraged at the disfavour they had experienced. He saw that fresh efforts were only likely to produce fresh failures. The statue he had cut lay broken at his feet. His hand was too feeble to renew the work.

“ Pass but that grate, which scarce a gleam supplies,
 There in the dust the wreck of Genius lies ;
 He whose arresting hand divinely wrought
 Each bold conception in the sphere of thought,
 And round, in colours of the rainbow, threw
 Forms ever fair, creations ever new !
 But as he fondly snatched the wreath of Fame,
 The spectre Poverty unnerved his frame :
 Cold was her grasp, a withering scowl she wore,
 And Hope's soft energies were felt no more ;
 Yet still how sweet the soothings of his art !
 From the rude wall what bright ideas start,
 Even now he claims the amaranthine wreath,
 With scenes that glow, with images that breathe !
 And whence these scenes these images declare,
 Whence but from Her who triumphs o'er despair.”

When Dr. Johnson visited Collins, at Islington, where he had appointed to meet his sister, there was no intellectual disorder perceptible from his conversation, but he acknowledged that he had relinquished study altogether, and pointing to a bible which lay open on the table, he remarked to his friend, 'I have only one book now, but that is the best.'

He next returned to Chichester, and became so feeble both in physical and mental energy, that he observed a strict seclusion. Dr. Johnson wrote several letters to him, but disease had advanced so rapidly that he was unable to reply. In corresponding with Warton, Johnson thus refers to this. "What has become of poor Collins? I wrote him a letter which he never answered. I suppose writing is very troublesome to him. That man is no common loss. The moralists all talk of the uncertainty of fortune and the transitoriness of beauty, but it is yet more dreadful to consider that the powers of the mind are equally liable to change; that understanding may make its appearance and depart; that it may blaze and expire."

To Collins life now became a heavy burden, but his sufferings were not permitted to be of long duration, for during one of the paroxysms of frenzy to which he was subject, he expired in his sister's arms. He was buried in the cathedral of Chichester, where a monument to his memory has been subsequently erected by public subscription. The poet is represented in a reclining attitude, calmly seeking consolation from the bible, while his lyre and one of his first poems lie neglected at his feet.

Dr. Johnson has thus portrayed his character:—
 “His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge considerable; his views extensive; his conversation elegant; and his disposition cheerful. His morals were pure, and his opinions pious; in a long continuance of poverty and long habits of dissipation, it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want by which the freedom of agency is almost destroyed; and long association with fortuitous companions will at last relax the strictness of truth, and abate the fervour of sincerity. That this man, wise and virtuous as he was, passed always unentangled through the snares of life, it would be temerity to affirm; but it may be said, that at least he preserved the source of action unpoluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure or casual temptation. Such was Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.”

To what is contained in this affectionate tribute of his friend and biographer we have but little to add, for as Goldsmith has remarked, “A poet while living is seldom an object sufficiently great to attract much attention; his real merits are known but to a few, and these are generally sparing in their praise. When his fame is increased by time it is then too late to investigate the peculiarities of his disposition; the dews of the morning are past, and we vainly try to continue

the chase by the meridian splendour." In the personal appearance of Collins there was nothing remarkable. He was of moderate stature, of a clear light complexion, and rather inclined to be slender than otherwise. His eyes were grey, but so weak as to make him apprehensive, lest blindness should result. He is represented by those who frequented his society, as being affable and good-natured, but visionary in his pursuits and romantic in his views, failings which might be expected in a mind where the ideal predominated so largely over the real. He was passionately fond of music, a recreation in which a lyric poet might naturally be supposed willing to indulge. Gray wrote his happy conclusion to 'The Bard' after hearing a Welsh harper at Cambridge. Milton listened to an organ for an hour every evening before he studied.

After the death of Collins, his works at length attracted the attention of the public, and received an instalment of that favour they so richly deserved. The Ode to the Passions was so much admired as to be recited on the stage, and a new edition, containing a perfect collection of his poems, obtained a general circulation. Dr. Langhorne, a critic of great natural sensibility, and well qualified by his correct judgment, and long experience, praised Collins so highly in one of the Reviews as to contribute largely towards establishing the poet's fame on its present permanent basis. The advance of his reputation must have been but slow, for Cowper had not, after the Task was written, either heard his name, or seen his poems, and was only casually induced to enquire for his works by observ-

ing the memoir in Johnson's Lives. He spoke of him, after perusing the Odes, as a poet of no great power, and was evidently insensible to the beauty of those finer touches of feeling which form a distinguishing excellence in the writings of Collins.

Of Collins it might be truly said, 'he looked on Nature with a poet's eye.' All his works discover to us a mind that loved to commune with the abstract beauties of nature, until it could give them 'a local habitation and a name.' He copies so truthfully, that the more intently we examine his pictures, the more numerous are the charms we discover. Every epithet suggests a maze of thought, and a verse often suffices to furnish matter for an evening's reflection. His genius was like a rich mine, which the possessor had not the energy to dig, although enough was raised to show the value of the ore it contained. His imagination delighted to meditate upon the vast, the abstract, the undefined. He loved to describe human passion and feeling in the general, rather than the particular. He preferred to contemplate the illimitable space of the desert, the infinite expanse of the heavens, rather than to analyse the tints of the mountain flower, or to expatiate upon the lustre of a solitary star. He regarded mankind collectively and not individually,

"And grasped whole worlds of reason, life, and sense,
In one close system of benevolence."

Collins is generally classed with the minor poets, because he has written so little. It is not, however, by the quantity of lines which an author may have strung together, that his position is to be determined. If the

poetry of Collins belong to the second class, it must be placed at the very height of that class, for in his particular department, some of his productions may be contrasted with those of the most eminent writers, without showing him as unworthy to be their rival. His pastoral poetry is not strikingly inferior to that of Pope. His Ode to the Passions will bear to be compared with Dryden's lyric to St. Cecilia, or The Bard of Gray. As Hazlitt observed, "Collins catches rich glimpses of the bowers of Paradise, and has lofty aspirations after the highest seats of the Muses."

Collins directed his attention principally to two different species of composition—the pastoral and the lyric. To the former, when his reasoning powers had not expanded beyond the scope incidental to juvenility—to the latter, when they were fully developed and improved by the larger education and more mature experience of manhood.

The pastoral is, perhaps, one of the most difficult branches of poetic art, because it requires not only a great capacity for depicting descriptive scenery, but the constant supervision of a highly-refined taste to prevent the style from sinking into flatness and insipidity, or from soaring too ambitiously into the regions of affectation and conceit. In attempting to avoid the display of too great a knowledge of the world, and too wide a commerce with its follies, the writer is apt to commit an opposite error, by reducing the personages of his poem to speak a language of simplicity that borders closely upon boorishness and rusticity. To prove how difficult it always

has been to steer between these dangerous extremes, scarce any author who has attempted the composition of this kind of poetry has ever obtained unqualified commendation from the critics; and even where he can be charged with no actual fault, it is seldom admitted that he has done more than produce a good imitation of some of his predecessors. Virgil is accused of copying Theocritus. Sannazarius is censured for applying to fishermen and their nets, what belongs exclusively to shepherds and their crooks. Fontenelle was ridiculed by Dryden, for making shepherdesses converse in the language of Versailles; while Pope was not only taunted with having pilfered Virgil, but was compelled to descend to be the rival of Philips, in the Guardian. It was, therefore, improbable that Collins, who wrote pastorals at the age of sixteen, would succeed where men of such eminent genius had barely been able to save their bays from being soiled and torn.

True pastoral was originally supposed to refer exclusively to the imitation of a shepherd's life, or of some one considered under that character; but the boundaries of this kind of writing have been enlarged by poetical license, so as to include any persons whose occupations are strictly confined to the business of husbandry or the culture of the soil. As agriculture and the tending of flocks were among the earliest employments in which mankind engaged themselves, Pope was led to regard pastoral poetry as the most original form of poetic art. In this opinion he is however probably mistaken, for men were much more likely

when emerging from barbarism, or living in a nomade state to celebrate their exploits and express their passions and affections in the lyric style, accompanied by some rude kind of music, than to indulge in those tranquil and philosophic modes of thought, which characterise the pastoral and constitute its distinguishing excellence. The more feasible source of this species of poetry is, that men, wearied with the satiety of pleasure, and fatigued by the tedious monotony of fashion in courts, cast their eyes back upon the simplicity of rural life, and by the pleasing contrast, such a novelty presented when compared with the disappointments and vexations inseparable from the refined society of the city, they became inspired with the idea of desiring to have the charms of their new idol represented to them through the fascinating medium of poetic description. Such a view of the origin of pastoral is much more favourable to the success of this species of writing than that of Pope, because it enlarges the scene and increases the materials of the poet; for if he is to be circumscribed to a golden age, in which there is nothing but happiness and plenty present, without vice or misfortune being even so much as known, he can hardly write twenty lines before his subject is exhausted. The reader soon gets tired of shepherds who do nothing but set down disconsolately by the side of a brook to lament the loss of a lamb, and of maids whose greatest troubles are brought about by the blight of a rosebud, or the death of a dove. Even the poet himself would be tempted to raise a tempest, or to bring in a flood, for

the sake of giving some variety and effect to his monotonous work. If such poetry is to be made interesting, it must take a wider and more comprehensive range than over the mere humble and obscure events of a shepherd's life; for it is only by a judicious blending of the simplicity of rustic manners, with the cultivated refinements and sensitive feelings common to the polished life, which mankind lead in the bustle of cities and the gaiety of large societies, that pastoral writing can be rendered sufficiently diversified and entertaining to attract the curiosity, or lay hold on the attention of the reader.

Considering the youth of Collins, when he attempted this difficult kind of composition it must be conceded that his pastorals indicated talent of uncommon promise. Towards the close of his life, he is said to have playfully observed to Warton, that his Persian Eclogues should have been called Irish Eclogues; but the censure is undeserved, since the descriptive scenery of the tales, and the language of the personages introduced in the dialogue, are sufficiently approximated to the Oriental type to save the poems from so severe a condemnation. The diction of the East is undoubtedly more inclined to the florid and the metaphorical, than is the diction used by Collins in these tales; but if the glittering and gorgeous ornaments of Oriental amplification and hyperbole had been adopted, the simplicity essential to pastoral must have been sacrificed in the attempt.

In the Eclogues of Collins, no fundamental rules are transgressed. The incidents are carefully selected

and applied with so much felicity, that the fable does not become too intricate or too extended. The expressions are delicately pure, and exceedingly appropriate, displaying all that ease and liveliness which are to be observed in the simplicity of nature herself. The manners and language of the various personifications are characteristic of Persian life, and bespeak considerable tact in a writer, whose knowledge of the East was entirely derived from books. The scenery is remarkably picturesque and natural, harmonising well with the general tone of the painting. In the following passage, this gracefulness of description is well exemplified—

“ Yet those green hills, in summer’s sultry heat,
Have lent the monarch oft a cool retreat.
Sweet to the sight is Zabran’s flowery plain,
And once by maids and shepherds loved in vain !
No more the virgins shall delight to rove
By Sargis’ banks, or Irwan’s shady grove ;
On Tarkie’s mountains catch the cooling gale,
Or breathe the sweets of Aly’s flowery vale :
Fair scenes ! but, ah ! no more with peace possess,
With ease alluring and with plenty blest !
No more the shepherds whitening tents appear,
Nor the kind products of a bounteous year ;
No more the date, with snowy blossoms crown’d,
But Ruin spreads her baleful fires around.”

Selim, or the Shepherd’s Moral, approaches nearer to the nature of true pastoral than do any of the other Eclogues. The reflections of the moralising herdsman are sufficiently deep to be instructive, without either displaying too great a subtlety of thought, or discovering such a knowledge of the world as would be inconsistent with the narrow opportunities of rural

life. His sentiments flow forth as the natural expressions of a man whose mind is pensively inclined without being affected or over-refined. His vivacity and sprightliness stop short of gallantry, while his admonitions, though delivered with a certain air of gravity and earnestness, do not partake of the prosaic nature of the moralist's discourse. Independent of the delicacy of sentiment and propriety of style which distinguish this poem, another excellence is perceptible in the shape of its conciseness and brevity, canons of art one could hardly expect so inexperienced a writer to observe. After enumerating the lavish gifts which nature has bestowed upon the maids of Persia, the poet counsels them to remember the worthlessness of mere personal charms, if unaccompanied by the accomplishments of cultivated sense, and points out the advantages that attend a virtuous life,—

“ Yet think not these, all beauteous as they are,
 The best kind blessings Heaven can grant the fair!
 Who trust alone in Beauty's feeble ray,
 Boast but the worth Bassora's pearls display;
 Drawn from the deep, we own their surface bright,
 But, dark within, they drink no lustrous light—
 Such are the maids, and such the charms they boast,
 By sense unaided, or to virtue lost.
 Self-flattering sex! your hearts believe in vain,
 That love shall blind when once he fires the swain,
 Or hope a lover by your faults to win,
 As spots on ermine beautify the skin:
 Who seeks secure to rule, be first her care,
 Each softer virtue that adorns the fair,
 Each tender passion, man delights to find
 The loved perfections of a female mind.”

The following lines display some chaste imagery in language remarkably musical and fluent—

"Come thou whose thoughts as limpid springs are clear,
 To lead the train, sweet Modesty! appear;
 Here make thy court amidst our rural scene,
 And shepherd girls shall own thee for their queen.
 With thee be Chastity, of all afraid,
 Distrusting all, a wise, suspicious maid;
 But man the most—not more the mountain doe
 Holds the swift falcon for her deadly foe;
 Cold is her breast, like flowers that drink the dew,
 A silken veil conceals her from the view;
 No wild desires amidst thy train be known
 But Faith, whose heart is fixed on one alone;
 Desponding Meekness, with her downcast eyes,
 And friendly Pity, full of tender sighs:
 And Love the last: by these your hearts approve,
 These are the virtues that must lead to love."

Hassan, or the Camel driver, belongs rather to the class of narrative than of pastoral poetry, and though more generally admired than any of the other Eclogues is inferior to its companions. The moral of the tale is pernicious, and as it is the purpose of poetry to instruct as well as to please, this forms a serious objection. If men always acted upon the principle of self-preservation, and drew back from every enterprise in which there was either danger or great personal discomfort, the world would make but slight advancement in social civilisation. Nothing is more certain than that a person will escape shipwreck if he never undertakes a voyage, and that he will be tolerably secure from lions and serpents if he keep within the walls of large cities, yet mankind would have accomplished little in the way of commerce or improvement if these puerile notions had been generally acted upon. It may be advanced, that the poet's reproof is only

intended to apply to the mercenary and the avaricious, a defence which might be listened to if he had been more explicit in his reasoning, but as he condemns everything in the shape of ambitious enterprise, and would sacrifice the treasures of the whole world to preserve 'the lily peace,' his argument in this instance must be regarded as unsound. Such a philosophic proposition as the following cannot be assented to—

"Thrice happy they, the wise contented poor,
From lust of wealth and dread of death secure,
They tempt no deserts, and no griefs they find,
Peace rules the day where reason rules the mind."

In the concluding lines of the poem, Hassan's real trouble is discovered. He is in love, and since people while in that seventh heaven are proverbially unfit for anything else, some excuse is offered for his reluctance to contend against the dangers and privations of the desert. The lines in which the passion for his Arab lover is expressed, are vapidly puerile, and would disfigure the pages of an Album, or a Book of Beauty. Such a passage as the following cannot be dignified with the name of poetry—

"Oh let me safely to the fair return,
Say with a kiss, she must not, shall not mourn,
Oh let me teach my heart to lose its fears,
Recalled by Wisdom's voice, and Zara's tears!"

In the apostrophe to the camels, the sultriness and dearth of the desert are painted with such a vividness of colour, that the description half transports the reader to the gloomy horrors and stern realities of the barren waste—

"Ye mute companions of my toils, that bear
 In all my griefs a more than equal share!
 Here, where no springs in murmurs break away,
 Or moss-crowned fountains mitigate the day,
 In vain ye hope the dear delights to know,
 Which plains more blest, and verdant vales bestow:
 Here rocks alone and tasteless sands are found,
 And faint and sickly winds for ever howl around."

This concluding line is the touch of a masterly hand.

The Third Eclogue relates one of those strange incidents of life, in which the worshippers of the romantic delight to indulge where

"Love like death levels all ranks,
 And lays the shepherd's crook beside the sceptre."

This poem is passable, being neither remarkable for any striking beauties or conspicuous defects. We are tempted to quote one couplet in which a thought, nearly as old as the world itself, is elegantly expressed,

"What, if in wealth the noble maid excel!
 The simple shepherd girl can love as well."

The Eclogue of the Fugitive Shepherds belongs equally to the mediocrities.

The lyrical writings of Collins come now to be considered—works which, as Warton, the historian of English Poetry, has justly observed, will be remembered while any taste for true poetry remains.

The lyric may be regarded as the original form in which poetry was first exhibited among the nations of antiquity. In the primitive rudeness of aboriginal society, before civilisation could scarce be said to have made any perceptible progress, music and poetry were combined, and used simultaneously by those who, un-

der the appellation of bards, professed to address themselves to the feelings, or to move the passions of mankind. When the seeds of improvement thus rough cast over the uncultured field of human intellect had began to produce the ripened fruits of maturity, lyric poetry still retained a station of the highest prominence and importance; so that amongst the most refined nations of antiquity, those who undertook the office of lyrical composition were regarded with an extraordinary degree of veneration and reverence. In Greece especially, the lyric poet was crowned with the loftiest honours that could be conceived; he officiated at the sacred festivals and public rejoicings, in the mysteries peculiar to the worship of the Pagan world, and in the celebration of the Olympian games; and occupied a position even more exalted than that of the heroes and the victors whose actions he was called upon to praise. At a period when the art of printing was unknown, and the stores of literature consequently only accessible to the learned and the erudite, the theatre and the circus formed almost the sole medium through which the emotions of the people could be awakened, and their tastes gratified. The Athenian, instead of reading books, or lounging in libraries, entered the theatre, and listened to the odes and chorusses of the great poets, who by the sublimity and beauty of their compositions kindled within his breast the flame of patriotism, and kept alive the love of country, and who by their magical power could stir the deepest passions of the soul, and hurry the feelings and transports of the heart to the very verge of agony or

rapture. To the direct intercourse established in this manner between the minds of the intellectual and the unlettered multitude, we may refer to account for that marvellous refinement, which the inhabitants of Greece achieved under disadvantages that might, at first sight, be supposed so insuperable, as to utterly preclude them from passing beyond the confines of the rudest ignorance; and although some persons in the present age may boast of the general diffusion of knowledge among the lower classes of European society, it may be questioned, whether, speaking collectively, the Athenians did not form a more correct appreciation of the beauties of *Æschylus* and *Sophocles*, than the English people ever have done of the finer passages of *Shakespeare* and of *Milton*. With the Romans, whose literature was principally copied from that of Greece, lyrical poetry, though highly esteemed, was less cultivated. The Odes of *Horace* were more frequently addressed to individuals for the purpose of displaying some philosophic or amorous sentiment, than to the people for the awakening of those passions and emotions which it had ever been the chief aim of the Athenian poets to call into action. During the middle ages of European society, when the chivalry of feudalism was in the full glory of its stirring career, the troubadours and the trouvères essentially contributed by their amatory and martial songs, to heighten the valour and inspire the devotion of those who went forth under the banners of religious enthusiasm, to perform deeds of high adventure, and actions of perilous enterprise. As love and war formed almost the sole occupation of all

the branches of the feudal family, the Provençal songs were by turns fiery and vehement, or voluptuous and tender. At the hour of approaching battle, the war song was chanted till its inspiring sounds were lost amidst the din and tumult of the conflict, while within the halls of the baronial castle the most powerful nobles and even kings themselves strove eagerly to acquire the accomplishments of the minstrel's art. William of Poitou and Richard Cœur de Lion are still renowned in the annals of song; and the celebrated instigator of the Sicilian Vespers, Peter III. of Aragon, has left many amatory lays still extant in the literature of Provence. From the borders of the Loire, the taste for lyrical poetry spread through Italy and Spain, the ode generally assuming the amatory type in the former, and the heroic in the latter.

“ Each martial chant they know, each manly rhyme,
Rude, ancient lays of Spain's heroic time.

In England, during the early periods of her history, the influence of the bards over the minds of the common people had become so prejudicial, that Edward I. when engaged in the Conquest of Wales, was compelled to resort to the cruel policy of effecting their complete extermination, and even in later times so powerful an instrument for good or evil has the lyric art been considered, that Fletcher was often heard to say, ‘Let me make the songs of a people, and you shall make their laws.’ When learning came to be more universally diffused by the aid of printing, and the more general cultivation of literature, poetry began to be more frequently recited or read, than applied to

the purposes of song; and from the period when the history of modern Europe commences, the lyric art will be found to occupy a much less prominent position than it did in those ages when the human intellect lay wrapped in the clouded obscurity of ignorance, barbarism, and superstition. In Scotland the war song has always been a significant national characteristic, and much of that valour and impetuosity displayed by the Highlanders on the field of battle, may be ascribed to the influence of those heroic lays, which at all periods of Scottish history have been so ardently cherished and held in such high esteem by that people.

“ But with the breath which fills

Their mountain pipe, so fill the mountaineers

With the fierce native daring which instils

The stirring memory of a thousand years,

And Evan's, Donald's, fame rings in each clansman's ears.”

Even in very recent times national songs have exercised a remarkable influence in directing the actions and inflaming the passions of a people, more particularly in those countries where the population allow their feelings to be guided rather by impulse than by reason. It would be a curious problem to ascertain the exact effect which the *Marsellaise* and the *Chant des Girondins* have produced in France during the last century. In England, lyric poetry has long since fallen to a very insignificant and subordinate position, but in Ireland, the time has not yet passed away, when in seasons of high political excitement, national melodies can almost rouse that impassioned and enthusiastic people to the verge of rebellion and civil war.

Although several kinds of poetry which were de-

signed to be read rather than to be sung, are still permitted to pass under the denomination of lyrical productions, it may be questioned, whether any compositions can be considered entitled to be classed under the designation of pure lyric, which are written in such a manner as to preclude their being sung or accompanied with music. Lyric poetry is especially the poetry of emotion, for it is one of the most peculiar characteristics of this kind of poem, that it has, or should have, an invariable tendency to produce feelings of enthusiasm and passion in those to whom it is addressed. Hence, more warmth and energy are requisite for the composition of the ode, than for any other description of poetry, the writer being always supposed as speaking the immediate sentiments of his heart, rather than as engaged in the narration of any action, or the recital of any event. Brevity and sententiousness, terseness of expression and condensation of thought, elevation of sentiment when the subject is heroic or philosophic, and animation of feeling when it is amatory or festive, are among the chief qualities essential to the success of lyric poetry. All inversion should be avoided in order that the thoughts may flow with rapidity, and strike the mind of the reader in a decisive and forcible manner. A certain degree of irregularity is allowable in the lyric measure, but this license must not be abused, lest the reader should become confused and find the meaning of the writer unintelligible. Cowley committed this fault in his Pindaric writings, poems in which the sentences are so lengthened out, and the rhymes placed so far apart

by the disorderly variety of the measure, that the language is often devoid of sense and always deficient in melody of sound.

A certain amount of enthusiasm is always looked for from those who undertake the composition of lyrical poetry, and as this animation of feeling frequently leads even men of real genius to become extravagant or obscure in their language, so it exposes inferior artists in a tenfold degree to the hazard of mistaking bombast for sublimity, and a fury of words for energy of thought. The fact of the poet delivering himself up to this heat of imagination during the interval of composition, has often been supposed to render him incapable of employing his ordinary powers of reason and judgment at other times, so that nothing is more common than to hear people speak of such a man, as they would of an idiot or a lunatic. Yet, upon these occasions, he is surely not more heated than some of our preachers in their discourses, or some of our orators in their flights of rhetorical display. An amusing incident is related of Dryden: "Lord Bolingbroke happening to pay a morning visit to Dryden, whom he always respected, found him in an unusual agitation of spirits, even to a trembling. On enquiring the cause, the old poet replied, 'I have been up all night, my musical friends made me promise to write an ode for their feast of St. Cecilia. I have been so struck with the subject which occurred to me, that I could not leave it till I had completed it; here it is finished, at one sitting,' and immediately he showed him the Ode, which places the British lyric above

that of any other nation." Many of the ancients were disposed to regard the rhyming tribe as not the wisest members of society, for Democritus thought that real poets must be a little mad, and Plato was so much afraid of them that he shut the doors of his imaginary Republic in their faces. Sophocles upon one occasion was brought before the judges at Athens by his relations, as one having fallen into second childhood and imbecility. The aged poet appeared in court without any witnesses, except an unfinished tragedy, which upon being read to the judges, caused them to rise before him and retort the charge on his accusers.

The Odes of Collins may be principally comprised under two denominations of lyric poetry, the heroic and the philosophic, the latter designation being intended to apply to that mixed kind of composition in which the writer, though employing the measure and structure of the lyric, encroaches largely on the field of the didactic, both in the choice of his subject, as well as in his manner of treating it. Many of the Odes of Horace and several English lyrical productions of high repute are written in this peculiar style, which occupies a middle region, neither ascending to the rapture and elevation of the Pindaric order of poetry on the one hand, nor falling to the mirthful gaiety and careless levity of the Anacreontic on the other. The sacred ode Collins never attempted, although the melancholy cast of his thoughts, we should have imagined, would have insensibly led him to dwell upon religious subjects. In amatory or bacchanalian poetry he has left no specimens of his skill, an omis-

sion which his solitary habits and the pensive gloominess of his disposition sufficiently account for. Whether he ever entertained an affection for any particular woman cannot now be discovered; at any rate, his writings reveal no tender confessions or amorous inclinations, that can be construed in such a way as to prove that he fell under the dominion of beauty, or that he was ensnared in the toils of love. Perhaps, like Cowley, he loved without having the resolution to tell his passion, for as Uncle Toby used to observe, "A poet without love were a physical and a metaphysical impossibility."

One of the most striking beauties in the lyrics of Collins, is the felicitous manner with which he adapts the structure of his metre to the particular kind of feeling he is endeavouring to convey, thus making the rapidity or slowness, the joyousness or solemnity, of the measure, correspond in some degree with the nature of the subject. The skilful manner in which he thus constructed his versification, so as to make the various pauses and rhymes give increased energy and force to the language of the poem, displays far greater artistic power on the part of the poet, than that laboured method which aims at creating imaginary resemblances between sounds and motions, by choosing such particular expressions as strike the fancy of the reader with a kind of faint similitude between the thought itself and the words employed to describe it.

An instance of this happy transition, from the sublime and the terrible to the pleasing and the beautiful, is well exemplified in the following passage from the Ode to the Passions,—

"First Fear, his hand its skill to try,
 Amid the chords bewilder'd laid,
 And back recoil'd, he knew not why,
 Even at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rush'd, his eyes on fire,
 In lightnings own'd his secret stings,
 In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
 And swept with hurried hand the strings.

With woful measures wan Despair—
 Low sullen sounds his grief beguiled,
 A sullen, strange, and mingled air,
 'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope! with eyes so fair,
 What was thy delighted measure?
 Still it whisper'd promised pleasure,
 And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
 Still would her touch the strain prolong,
 And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
 She call'd on Echo still through all the song;
 And where her sweetest theme she chose,
 A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,
 And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved her golden hair."

The personifications of Melancholy and Cheerfulness in the same poem, furnish another striking example of the perfect skill with which Collins could pass his hand from the highest and the boldest to the lowest and most delicate notes of the lyre—

"Pale Melancholy sat retired,
 And from her wild sequester'd seat,
 In notes by distance made more sweet,
 Pour'd through the mellow horn her pensive soul:
 And dashing soft from rocks around,
 Bubbling runnels join'd the sound;
 Through glades and glooms the mingled measure stole,
 Or o'er some haunted streams with fond delay,
 Round a holy calm diffusing,
 Love of peace and lonely musing,
 In hollow murmurs died away.

But O! how alter'd was its sprightlier tone!
 When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,
 Her bow across her shoulders flung,
 Her buskins gemm'd with morning dew,
 Blew an inspiring air that dale and thicket rung,
 The hunter's call to Faun and Dryad known;
 The oak-crown'd Sisters, and their chaste-eyed Queen,
 Satyrs and Sylvan boys were seen,
 Peeping from forth their alleys green;
 Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear,
 And Sport leapt up, and seized his beechen spear."

In the Ode to Evening, Collins has successfully applied blank verse to lyric poetry, an experiment which required the most exquisite appreciation of melody on the part of the writer, to save him from failing in the task. This poem, though written without the introduction of a single rhyme, is perhaps one of the most musical odes in the English language, the sounds of the measure falling upon the ear of the listener with a softness admirably adapted to the nature of the scene intended to be presented to his imagination. We use the term listener here, because a lyric poem, if not sung, is at least always supposed to be read aloud. By the skilful management of the cadences of the poem, and the well sustained connection between its different parts, an effect is produced upon the ear, very similar to that which meets the eye of the spectator when watching the approach of evening in the material world. The frequent pauses and consequent abrupt change of sound required for rhyme, would have ill suited that peculiar gentleness with which the dim and dusky shadows of evening approach, before they fade into the darkness of night. Collins must have

watched many a sunset before he sat down to write this poem.

We are tempted to transcribe this ode in its entire state, for it is a picture that will not admit of being broken into parts, or of being exhibited in fragments.

“If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales,

O nymph reserved! while now the bright-hair'd sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers stealing through thy dark'ning vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shews
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and Elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
Or find some ruin 'midst its dreary dells,
Whose walls more awful nod
By thy religious gleams.

Or if chill blust'ring winds, or driving rain,
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That, from the mountain's side,
Views wilds and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd spires,
 And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
 Thy dewy fingers draw
 The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
 And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve !
 While Summer loves to sport
 Beneath thy lingering light :

While fallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
 Or Winter, yellow through the troublous air,
 Affrights thy shrinking train,
 And rudely rends thy robes :

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
 Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling Peace,
 Thy gentlest influence own,
 And love thy favourite name !”

Claude never conceived a finer picture than this.

Another excellence, observable in the lyrics of Collins, is the correct taste with which he selected the various ornaments that elegantly grace his diction, and confer a chasteness of beauty upon his language. In his verse, no new-coined words or foreign idioms make their appearance, but a general simplicity of expression pervades the whole. Though gifted with a prodigal fancy, Collins drew the materials from his store with remarkable judgment and discretion, well knowing the error into which those writers fall, “who,” as Sidney observed, “cast spice upon every dish that is served at the table ; and, like the Indians, who not content to wear ear-rings, thrust jewels through their noses and lips because they will be seen to be fine.” In the Ode to Simplicity, Collins has well pointed out how necessary it is, even for the most gifted favourites of the Muse, to keep the eye fixed upon Nature—

"Though taste, though genius, bless
 To some divine excess,
 Faint's the cold work till thou inspire the whole:
 What each, what all supply,
 May court, may charm our eye,
 Thou! only thou canst raise the meeting soul!"

The Ode on the death of Thomson is written in a strain of plaintive melody that few persons can listen to without sharing the sympathy and bearing witness to the sensibility of the writer. There is a kind of sincerity breathing through the poem, that bespeaks genuine feeling and unaffected grief. To Collins, Thomson must have been a man after his own heart. They were each enthusiastic admirers of nature, ardent lovers of the romantic, and more inclined to yield themselves up to the pleasures of the imagination than to improve the powers of reason by the diligence of study or the patience of research. They were both like those who

"in some desert inaccessible,
 Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
 Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time."

Their minds were generally occupied in attempting to give a semblance and a form to those airy and fantastic shapes that are constantly filling the thoughts of the idealist, and colouring the fancy of the visionary. They were fond of roaming through the bowers of imaginary gardens, and wandering amidst the halls of enchanted palaces, of listening to the harmony of ideal music, and holding converse with the spirits and the fairies, the sylphs and the elves, of a fabulous world,

"Those gay creatures of the element,
 That in the colours of the rainbow live,
 And play i' the plighted clouds."

Their hearts were full of the milk of human kindness, of that generous sensibility which gives such an air of sincerity and warmth to every sentiment they uttered. They were both largely endowed with the genuine *impetus sacer*, 'the light from Heaven,' that inspiration of the heart which lends at once,

"The vision and the faculty divine."

The scene of this poem is laid at Richmond, where Thomson was buried, and where, as Collins pathetically observes,—

"Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
And oft suspend the dashing oar
To bid his gentle spirit rest!"

In concluding the Ode, Collins pours forth a tender apostrophe to the 'parted shade' of his friend,—

"The genial meads assigned to bless
Thy life, shall mourn thy early doom!
There hinds and shepherd girls shall dress,
With simple hands thy rural tomb.

Long, long, thy stone and pointed clay,
Shall melt the musing Briton's eyes;
'O vales and wild woods!' shall he say,
'In yonder grave your Druid lies!"

The Ode, written in 1746, was probably an elegiac tribute to the memory of those who fell gloriously in defence of their country, on the plains of Culloden. The poem displays much of that chasteness of fancy for which the Muse of Collins is eminently distinguished. In the opening lines the writer appears to have had in view, the sentiment of Horace, '*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*—

"How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
 By all their country's wishes blest;
 When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
 Returns to deck their hallowed mould;
 She there shall dress a sweeter sod,
 Than fancy's feet have ever trod.
 By fairy hands their knell is rung,
 By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
 There Honour comes a Pilgrim grey,
 To bless the turf that wraps their clay,
 And Freedom shall awhile repair,
 To dwell a weeping hermit there."

The Dirge in Cymbeline is highly poetical,—

"To fair Fidelle's grassy tomb
 Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
 Each opening sweet, of earliest bloom,
 And rife all the breathing Spring.
 No wailing ghost shall dare appear
 To vex with shrieks this quiet grove,
 But shepherd lads assemble here,
 And melting virgins own their love.
 No wither'd witch shall here be seen,
 No goblins lead their nightly crew;
 The female fays shall haunt the green,
 And dress thy grave with pearly dew!
 The redbreast oft at evening hours
 Shall kindly lend his little aid,
 With hoary moss, and gather'd flowers,
 To deck the ground where thou art laid.
 When howling winds, and beating rain,
 In tempests shake the sylvan cell;
 Or 'midst the chase on every plain,
 The tender thought on thee shall dwell.
 Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
 For thee the tear be duly shed;
 Beloved, till life can charm no more;
 And mourn, till Pity's self be dead."

Gray in his Churchyard Elegy had originally inserted a stanza which bears so close a resemblance to the fourth verse of this poem, that he could not but have had his eye on it when he wrote. Probably this was the reason which induced him to order the omission of the verse in the later editions of the Elegy, since the stanza in question was one of the most beautiful in the whole poem.

"There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen are showers of violets found;
The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

Gray must have been actuated by some powerful motive to blot such an exquisite stanza as this from his work.

Dr. Johnson, in his final estimate of the poetry of Collins, has thus delivered his opinion: "To what I have formerly said of his writings may be added that his diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines are commonly of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants. As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure."

That Collins may be charged with some of these faults cannot be denied, but the old sage was too much prejudiced in favour of the Drydenic school to decide upon the merits of allegorical poetry with an impartial

judgment. If poets when they sat down to write verses did not reason as logically as philosophers, they had no hopes of gaining admission to his Parnassus. He seemed to forget that

"Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true critics dare not mend,
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the realms of art,
Which, without passing through the judgment, gains
The heart, and all its end at once attains."

We are not blind idolisers of the genius of Collins, who seek to place him on a level with the great masters of poetic art. We do not regard his writings with such admiration as to esteem his name worthy to be mentioned in conjunction with that of a Milton, a Shakspeare, or a Spenser, but there are occasions when one may turn aside from the contemplation of those mighty rivers as they roll down in their magnificent sublimity, to gaze upon the beauties of the sparkling fountain, and to listen to the music of the bubbling rill.

HISTORICAL FRAGMENTS.

I. ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OF 1789.

II. ON THE MEROVINGIAN KINGS OF FRANCE.

A N E S S A Y
UPON THE CAUSES OF THE
F R E N C H R E V O L U T I O N .

The History of Europe, from 1789 to 1815,
By Archibald Alison, F.R.S.E.

MR. ALISON'S work upon the French Revolution has filled up a void in historical literature. His subject, including, as it does, thirty years of European history, marked by some of the most extraordinary changes the world ever witnessed, is one, perhaps, of all others, the most interesting and instructive an historian of the present day could select. We know of only two periods in modern history, with which the revolutionary epoch will bear a comparison in point of importance. First, that remarkable era in which all the nations of Christendom embarked to undertake the Oriental crusades; and, secondly, that which beheld the rapid and general diffusion of Protestantism over Europe, in the sixteenth century; but even these events, momentous as they are, must appear to the generality of readers infinitely less attractive and alluring. Although we differ widely from Mr. Alison respecting many of the causes which led to the Revolution; although we dissent from several con-

clusions he has drawn as to its result, yet we consider his History a noble work, and one "which men will not willingly let die"—a monument which will hand his name honorably down to future and distant generations. He may indeed exclaim, with the Roman poet—

"Non omnis moriar
Multaque pars mei vitabit Libitininam."

In the narrow limits of a review, it would be impossible, by any methods of condensation and abridgment, to embrace the whole period over which the historian has extended his labours: we shall, therefore, confine our remarks strictly to the causes which produced the Revolution, thus attempting to place before the reader, in a small compass, one of the most prominent figures in the foreground of the picture.

The formation of the French monarchy occupied the period included between the accession of Hugh Capet, and the reign of Henry the Fourth. When Hugh ascended the throne France was divided into various provinces, the rulers of which were virtually independent sovereigns, paying but a nominal allegiance to the crown. These feudal barons coined their own money, made their own laws, dispensed justice, and entered into wars, without in either instance consulting the will of the reigning monarch. Louis le Gros was occupied three years before the castle of one of these rebellious lords. By degrees, however, the baronial privileges of the nobility were obscured and destroyed by the encroaching growth of regal power; and when Henry the Fourth attained

the acmè of his glorious career, the whole of these petty sovereignties had become amalgamated, forming one kingdom under the administration of one sovereign. The royalty of absolutism had replaced the royalty of feudalism. One ruler held the reins of power instead of many.

Henry the Fourth was, perhaps, the first monarch who could be strictly said to govern France. Unlike his predecessors, he had no longer to encounter the feudal array of a Duke of Burgundy, or to tremble before the formidable forces of a Duke of Brittany; by his military genius he concluded the final consolidation of the monarchy; and under him the power of royalty was felt from the hills of Normandy to the fertile valleys of Provence. Fortune destined Henry for a life of lofty enterprise; by the Edict of Nantes, and his conversion to the Catholic faith, he closed the civil wars which had desolated France for thirty years; by his conciliatory yet firm direction of the government, he appeased those hostile factions of the nobles which had hitherto rent the kingdom with the conflicts of a wretched anarchy; and by the judicious direction of his foreign policy he enabled France to assume a more prominent position in the European commonwealth than she had hitherto enjoyed. Advised and guided by the prudent counsels of the virtuous Sully, Henry ruled France with ability and vigour; he was free from bigotry and intolerance, yet not indifferent to religion; always more eager to pardon than to persecute; more ready to forgive than to punish. His subjects universally beloved him, and

his reign is, to this day, regarded by all true Frenchmen, as one of the best and brightest periods of their national history. Yet even under the mild administration of Henry, the nobles attempted to regain their feudal independence. Conspiracies were formed, plots devised, and foreign alliances entered into with Spain and England by these daring chiefs, to effect a revolution by which their local governments of the provinces should once more be made hereditary possessions; the punishment of Biron, however, at length struck terror into the hearts of the discontented grandees and caused them to desist from such rash designs.

The greatest political error with which Henry can be charged was (the neglect he evinced in not establishing some representative assembly of the people) to balance the undue power hitherto possessed by the nobles. However, both he and his successors appear to have deemed it wiser to increase the prerogatives of royalty, and thus controul the nobility by the iron hand of absolute authority, rather than to raise up several institutions, each obtaining just sufficient force to neutralize the others. At the commencement of the fifteenth century the States General, an assembly composed of the clergy, the nobles, and the Tiers Etat, possessed the exclusive privilege of imposing all taxation; their assent being absolutely indispensable before any aids, however trivial, could be levied for the service of the state. This valuable right, which formed such a judicious check upon the prerogatives of royalty was, however, wrested from the States, by the ambitious usurpations of Charles VII. and Louis XI., two

monarchs who destroyed the germs of free government in France, and laid the foundations of that absolute power subsequently enjoyed by the crown. After such encroachments upon the privileges of the States had become legally confirmed by the tacit consent of successive generations, these assemblies were only summoned to discuss and settle questions which involved any disputes respecting the regal succession, or the appointment of regencies upon the occasion of a minority. Henry, it must be admitted, received but little encouragement from the previous history of the States General, to hazard a revival of their original rights; nor even had he desired to make such an attempt was his position favourable for so delicate an experiment. The example of the Puritans in England, who then began to trouble James the First with their rebukes and remonstrances, together with the recent religious feuds between the Catholics and Huguenots in France, form a sufficient apology for the course which Henry pursued, since to have conferred upon the States their original privilege of imposing all taxation, would, at such an epoch, have infallibly reproduced the League, and required another Ivry to restore peace. Indeed, after the edict of Nantes, the Huguenots obtained a species of representative assembly to defend their interests and regulate their own affairs with the government; but, it was found to be so completely an *imperium in imperio*, that Sully advised Henry to command its dissolution, and substitute a few deputies from the protestant body in its place.

The reign of Louis XIII. would bear a more appropriate designation, if it were termed the reign of Richlieu ; as the Cardinal ruled France during almost the whole career of this feeble monarch. With less natural talent, Louis resembled his nephew, Charles the Second, in many particulars—they were both devoted to a life of sensuality and pleasure—they were both too indolent to govern ; and so long as the one could find a De Luynes to hunt with him in the royal forests, and the other feed his ducks in the Mall, under the inspection of Madame de Querouaille, or Nell Gwynne, they were, perhaps, as indifferent about state affairs, as any two monarchs who ever attempted to assume the responsibilities of power. Richlieu's policy consisted in combating the ambition of Austria, in repressing the advances of the Huguenots, and in humbling the pretensions of the nobles. The minority of Louis had enabled the nobility and the princes of the blood to resume that course of opposition to the crown, which always proved so prejudicial to the welfare of the kingdom ; and so powerful had these magnates again become, that in the contest between Louis and the Queen-Mother the influence of Epernon alone was sufficient to decide the day against the king. No sooner was Richlieu placed in power than he determined on curbing these haughty rivals of the crown, and bringing them under the yoke of its subjection. He discovered their plots, he defeated their combinations, he punished their treasons. To the traitor he showed neither mercy nor compassion. No entreaties moved him—

Richieu's policy

Austria

To reduce the power of the Huguenots

To weaken the power of the nobles

7

no supplications altered his determination. A prince, of the blood was banished—a Chalais, a Marillac, a Montmorency successively perished on the scaffold; and France beheld the purest blood of her proudest nobility shed to prove the irresistibility of royal authority, and the omnipotence of royal power. Having intimidated the nobles by the uniform severity with which he chastised their offences, Richlieu proceeded to weaken their territorial influence, by alluring them to taste those Circean pleasures of the capital, which ultimately produced the ruin and the degradation of their order. Flattered and enchanted by the ceremonies and dissipations of the court, the nobility deserted their estates; and having squandered their fortunes upon the debaucheries and sensualities of pleasure, they were compelled to inflict heavier burdens on the peasant to supply resources for the vicious and profligate habits they had acquired. Those antient ties which once bound the vassal to his lord, were broken; all respect on the one side, all esteem on the other vanished; and in the place of mutual attachment and reciprocal affection sprang up those dark and fearful passions of jealousy, of hatred, and of malice, which were destined at a future hour to direct the arm of vengeance, and to sharpen the animosities of a terrible revenge.

Having, through his artful policy and severe discipline, made the nobles subordinate to the crown, Richlieu employed his address to keep them so, by rendering them dependent upon its favours; and knowing how essential it was that royalty should possess the

disposal of all honours and distinctions, to enable that institution to maintain a real superiority in the state, he declared every appointment, whether for the government of a castle or a province, tenable only during the life of the occupant. By this politic measure a vast amount of patronage accrued to the minister, and a portion of the nobility instantly offered their services to assist the court in any enterprise it might undertake, hoping thus to obtain the recompenses which were constantly flowing forth from such an abundant source. Even those haughty chiefs, who still retained their antient attachment to the charms of hereditary independence, were thus brought within the pale of obedience, and compelled to seek the smiles of royal favour if they desired to enjoy their former influence. However questionable may have been the means which Richlieu occasionally employed to humble the nobility, no one can deny but that he served France by the changes which he effected. If the larger trees of the forest had not been vigorously pruned, the vegetation of the humbler plants must have entirely ceased. (To exalt the grandeur of France, to increase the prerogatives of royalty, and to confer authority upon the government,) were the chief characteristics in the policy of Richlieu. He loved power, but it was not from any selfish views; he grasped at riches, but it was to apply them for his country's good; he persecuted individuals, but it was to serve the state. We believe him to have been a true patriot; we believe him to have been sincere when, upon his death-bed, he exclaimed, "O mon juge !

condamnez moi si j'ai eu d'autre intentions que de servir le roi et l'état."

Under the skilful guidance of the Cardinal royalty was fairly emancipated from the fetters and restraints with which feudalism had sought to embarrass it. The authority of the crown henceforth became regular, uniform, and indisputable. Monarchy had obtained the ascendancy—it was the predominant fact in the state. The reign of Louis XIII. forms an era from whence we may especially date the birth of modern society in France. Commerce rapidly increased; the arts began to flourish; the style of architecture improved; luxuries were multiplied; life became embellished with innumerable graces; and literature, nurtured in the court, then threw forth her gentle beams to dispel the last shadows of the intellectual night. The magnificent palaces, the splendid edifices, which date from this particular epoch in French history, incontestibly prove how prevailing was the monarchical power. Everything was accomplished by the hand of royalty, or of its ministers. Of public spirit, of public enterprise, there is literally no record. We observe no stately memorial, erected by municipal activity; no towering fabric, which owed its origin to national enthusiasm. The Hotel de la Reine of Catherine de Medicis, the Place Royale of Henri Quatre, the Palais Royal and the Academy of Richlieu, are all lasting monuments of princely power and regal grandeur; but we look in vain through France for the Exchange of our English Gresham, or the Charter-House of Sutton. Even

upon the aspect of material society, was painted in vivid colours the insignificance and humility of the bourgeoisie.

One of the greatest defects in Richlieu's policy, was his abandonment of the States General. To have raised the Tiers Etat, as an ally of the monarchy, in counterpoising the undue power of the nobles, would have been an act worthy of such a statesman; but the golden moments were neglected, and when in future times great minds could no longer be furnished to direct the helm of absolute power, this fatal error became palpably evident. In the reign of Charles VIII. the States General had made their final but unsuccessful struggle, to regain the privilege of regulating the taxation of the state; and from that period, until Louis XIII. ascended the throne, their declining influence became more and more visible. In 1614, when they assembled for the last time, prior to their disusage, the conduct of the Tiers Etat was dignified and noble; they demanded the pensions of the nobility to be reduced, and the *taille* imposed upon the people to be mitigated; they exposed the wrongs and indignities to which their order had been subjected, by the encroaching spirit of the noblesse; but their remonstrances passed away without avail, their rebukes without effect. "Let not," said the eloquent De Mesme in the debate, "the noblesse presume too much over the Tiers Etat, since it often happens that the cadets of a great family restore to it that honour and illustration, which has been thrown away by the elder brethren." Thus did the Tiers Etat perish, conscious

even in their expiring moments of their importance to the state ; thus were their last words a noble and prophetic protest against that fatal separation, which was fast approaching between the privileged classes of society and the people. From this period, until their memorable assemblage upon the eve of the Revolution, in 1789, the States General were abandoned, a complete silence being observed respecting them during this long interval ; and, although the example of the English Commons, in their protracted struggle with the incorrigible Stuarts, must have been constantly before the eyes of the nation, no one appears to have desired or demanded their revival. The anomalous functions which the Parliament of Paris exercised, in reference to the general legislation of the kingdom, may be considered as the material cause that consigned the States General to this lengthened oblivion, since it is highly improbable they would have been suffered to lie dormant for two centuries, if the Parliament had confined its labours to its original duties, and remained a tribunal strictly limited to the affairs of justice.

At the risk of proving tedious to the reader, we shall hazard a few observations upon the Parliament. This institution, originally the chief feudal law court in the kingdom, was composed of the members of the royal council, the officers of the king's household, and the twelve peers of France. Its jurisdiction at first did not extend beyond, what in the language of feudalism is termed, the king's domain ; but as the surrounding baronies became gradually annexed to that of the crown, all appeals from their courts were

referred to this tribunal for a final decision. After the barbarian customs of trial by battle and trial by ordeal had fallen into disuse, a new system for the transaction of judicial business was necessarily required. Hence, in lieu of the irregular and superstitious practices, peculiar to the feudal laws, the trial by witness was adopted; and as the barons found themselves but ill adapted to explain, or to unravel the intricacies of this reformed jurisprudence, a new class of men termed legists were admitted to the court especially for that purpose. The Peers, however, though often absent in the pursuits of war, or of the chase, still retained their privilege of sitting in the Parliament and thus contributed to preserve its political importance. From the earliest period at which the Kings of France began to exercise general legislative powers, their ordinances, though drawn up beforehand in the council of the palace, were promulgated and registered in the Parliament. Prior to the fifteenth century the counsellors of this court never asserted any claim to examine or question the propriety of the royal edicts, when brought there for registration, but simply entered them upon the records for public observance. In the reign of Louis XI., however, they made pretensions to a new right, by declaring that they could upon disapproval delay the registration of any law proposed by the crown; and not only was the claim successfully established, but the members extorted even from this despotic monarch an ordinance pronouncing them to be immoveable from office, except in case of legal forfeiture. The crown originally

possessed the privilege of appointing counsellors to the Parliament, but Francis I., embarrassed with financial difficulties in his contest with the Emperor Charles V., resigned this important prerogative, by permitting the members to purchase their seats for life— a change which materially increased the independence of the Parliament, since it placed the officers beyond the influence of royal caprice, without subjecting them to become the slaves of democratic faction through popular election. Until the Bourbons succeeded the House of Valois, this institution formed a salutary and efficient restraint to monarchical ambition ; but after the reign of Henry IV. its legitimate authority was destroyed by the usurping hand of absolute royalty, as we shall presently describe. Although the Parliament occasionally erred by showing a too servile compliance with the wishes of the crown, or with the bigotry of the priests, yet every impartial observer must confess that the magistracy of France, taken as a body, have been uniformly distinguished for their integrity and love of justice. Isolated instances of factious persecutions and corrupt practices may, we are aware, be clearly proved against them ; yet, regarding their conduct generally, it would be difficult to select a class of men who when exposed to similar temptations have evinced such upright intentions, and pronounced such equitable decisions. France has, at least, a right to remember, with feelings of pride, the names of L'Hopital, of D'Aguesseau, of Molè, of Malesherbes ; and even at the present day it would be well for some of her

republican rulers to cast their eyes upon the actions of these men, who showed that it was possible to be just without being vindictive, to be firm without being violent, and to be dignified without being vain.

The reign of Louis XIV. resembles that of Elizabeth of England in many respects, each of them being favourable specimens of that absolute royalty, which prevailed in both countries during the interval between the destruction of feudalism and the definite establishment of the Third Estate. The government of the Tudors was far more arbitrary in its character than that of the Bourbons:—there is nothing in the whole history of France which can be compared to the tyranny practised by Henry VIII.; no French monarch ever dared inflict half the wrongs upon his subjects, that this remorseless ruler did upon the English people. Even so late as the reign of Elizabeth the French ambassador then remarked, that the English government was far more despotic than that of his own country. One circumstance, however, which had a momentous bearing upon their future destinies, distinguished the two nations. In England the Third Estate was never wholly abandoned—in France it was so. The English monarchs might substitute their own proclamations for the established laws of the realm—they might levy unbearable imposts—they might execute people, after submitting them to mock trials—they might confiscate the estates and property of half their subjects, without asking the sanction of parliament—they might do all this with impunity, but the boldest of them never dared

abolish the House of Commons, or prevent the representatives of the people from being chosen. The Commons, abject, mean, servile, despicable, as their conduct under the Tudors was, still existed. There was always a Lower House in form, if not in spirit. However slender might be the stream, it never wholly ceased to flow. In France, on the contrary, there were periods—and the reign of Louis XIV. was one of them—when the Third Estate appeared as obsolete to the people, as an arquebuse of the middle ages would to a soldier of the present day. The nation, proud of their monarchy, seemed to care but little for the loss of their ancient rights; and so long as kings could be found to flatter their subjects with the vanities and ostentations of a deceptive and illusory glory, subjects were ready to pay the homage of a slavish loyalty to their rulers in return. But this deceitful apathy on the part of the people, respecting their national liberties, was destined to be one day succeeded by a terrible reaction—a reaction proportioned in its violence to the evils which had been accumulated by neglect, and multiplied by crime.

The minority of Louis XIV. offered a favourable occasion for moulding the French constitution into a limited monarchy, by compelling royalty to recall the States General, and grant them a full restoration of their original legislative privileges. Some rude efforts to accomplish changes in the government analogous to this, were certainly attempted by the people in the Revolt of the Fronde; but, partly owing to the selfish views and lamentable indecision of those who professed

to be leaders of the movement, and partly to the injudicious plan of selecting the Parliament instead of the States General, as an instrument to effect the proposed reform, the popular party suffered a complete reverse. By the miscarriage of these designs, all prospective hopes of conferring constitutional liberties upon the nation, were, at least for a time, destroyed; and royalty, resuming once more the prerogatives of absolutism, found itself established upon a firmer basis than it had hitherto enjoyed. The return of Mazarin to Paris, after his triumph over the Parliament, was much the same as if Charles I. had in 1648 regained arbitrary power, and finally destroyed the liberties and privileges of the English Commons—for never is despotism so haughty and exacting, as when standing a victor upon the field of unsuccessful revolt. Nothing, perhaps, contributed so much to the defeat of the Frondeurs, as the want of purpose and determination evinced by their leaders. No lofty motives were in action—no deep passions were stirred. There was neither a Hampden to rouse the one—nor a Cromwell to direct the other. In the place of an exalted patriotism, all was intrigue, vacillation, frivolity, and deceit. Parties were espoused, and opinions adopted, on the most trivial considerations; and more partisans were enlisted into the rival camps by a smile from Madame de Montbazon, or a flower from the hand of the beautiful Duchess de Longueville, than from any conviction that it was necessary to re-establish the Third Estate, or to resist the arbitrary power of the crown. Notwithstanding the noble heroism of Condé

and Turenne, the undaunted firmness of Molè, and the enduring fortitude of Broussel, it is to be feared the Fronde confers but little merit on those concerned in its various stratagems and intrigues. To say, that it was a struggle between the ambitious minds of Mazarin and De Retz for the supremacy in the state, is, perhaps, far nearer the truth than it would be to attempt to describe it as an effort on the part of the nobles and the people, to extort from royalty a restoration of the national liberties.

The resumption of absolute power by the crown, after the unsuccessful issue of the Fronde, may be considered as one of the most unfavourable events which ever happened to the French nation. It destroyed the last hopes of forming a free government; it wasted the last opportunity propitious for such a consummation; it left the people a prey to all the evils of despotism; and necessitated the continuance of that fatal subdivision between the social ranks, which nothing but the Revolution was ever destined to efface. Society in France, at this period, may be said to have been divided into two distinct classes—the privileged orders and the people; the former, which embraced the nobles and the superior clergy, enjoying a complete immunity from taxation by the exercise of feudal rights most unjustly retained; the latter, which included the inferior clergy, the bourgeoisie, and the peasantry, bearing the whole burden of taxation, and compelled to surrender the proceeds of their industry towards the maintenance of the state. To remove this marked inequality between

the higher and the lower orders of society—to make each class contribute its fair and equitable proportion for the support of the public revenues—and to obtain for the people a participation and a voice in the government of the state, were the grand purposes for which the Fronde should have been raised. The reassemblage of the States General, with increased privileges, was the only means adequate to accomplish such organic changes in the constitution; but a variety of circumstances occurred to frustrate so desirable an event. Royalty was striving to regain the arbitrary power, that for a moment had escaped it; the nobles and the higher orders of the clergy were intent upon preserving their privileged immunity from taxation; the people possessed neither wealth, political power, nor any sustained unity of purpose. Hence, the favourable opportunity, never to be recalled, passed away without avail; the old *regime*, sanctioned in all its vices, and strengthened in all its corruptions, was again dominant; the nobles and the privileged classes resumed their original position; the people were once more humbled, abased, and silenced. The tempest subsided, and the troubled waters receded back within their ancient limits.

All attempts to extort popular liberties from Louis XIV., after he had attained his majority, would, of course, have been unsuccessful; his dominions were inhabited by subjects, not by a people; he knew nothing about balanced institutions, or checks upon the prerogative; with him the question was not how the flock was to be shorn, but when it was to be shorn;

he imposed the taxes, he received the taxes, and he spent the taxes; he then burned the accounts, and imposed more. His opinions upon government were expressed in three words, "L'état c'est moi." At any period subsequent to his reign, the Revolution required to produce a free government would probably have been attended with quite as much violence and destructive force, as actually happened when it did occur, although the increasing deficit in the finances naturally had a tendency to widen the chasm, and aggravate the shock of the convulsion. The minority of Louis XIV. may, perhaps, be marked as the last date at which it would have been practicable to establish a constitutional government, without necessitating the extinction of the nobility, and the destruction of the monarchy; but after this period had passed away, without any real success having been attained, in restoring Communal freedom, the Revolution was inevitable—it might be delayed—and it was delayed; but its advent might even then have been foretold with almost as much precision, as an astronomer of the present day predicts an eclipse.

The reign of Louis XIV. has always remained a renowned era in the history of modern Europe. Distinguished by the most brilliant assemblage of contemporary genius France ever witnessed, it has been justly styled, her Augustan age. Its duration, the grandeur of its events, the celebrity of its courtly annals, and the important part it performed, in casting the illumined rays of a brighter and more refined civilization over European society, all alike combine

to render it an epoch interesting to the philosopher, and instructive to the moralist. Occupying the greater proportion of that period, in which the principle of pure monarchy predominated in France, it pre-eminently displays both the advantages and the evils resulting from that form of government, and teaches us how little permanence or stability the most enlightened and the most able minds can ensure to an institution, the welfare of which wholly depends upon the constant presence of a single genius, to regulate the workings and direct the movements of its delicate machinery. To enumerate the actions and analyze the character of Louis XIV., would be to write the history of France for half a century, since, during the term occupied by his rule, twenty millions of people implicitly surrendered their judgment and opinions to his guidance, as well as their resources to his discretion. Never did any ruler govern a state with more unlimited authority. Ministers and parliament, nobles and subjects, men of letters and the priesthood, all alike bowed in servile obedience to his will, and paid the homage of a courtly adulation to his inclinations and desires. Cruel and tyrannical, as Louis proved himself upon many occasions, it cannot be questioned but that he possessed the means to have been far more so, if inclined; and they who censure his actions with harshness and severity, should remember the dangerous temptations to which he was often exposed, and the deceitful allurements by which he was constantly surrounded. On the other hand, a too superficial view of his career might equally

mislead. Dazzled with his victories and his triumphs, his magnificent public works and his stately palaces, his ceremonious courts and his elegant flatterers, we might overlook the price at which such marvels were purchased. We might forget how many hearts were broken, how many tears were shed, how many hearths were made desolate, how many noble families were ruined and proscribed, how many industrious citizens were driven into exile; in fine, how much pain and suffering humanity underwent, to rear up this costly monument of kingly grandeur—this august memorial of kingly pride. After calmly surveying the evils he occasioned; after admitting every excuse, which an indulgent lenity could raise in his extenuation; after acknowledging the vast improvements he effected, in promoting civilization, the personal claims of Louis XIV. to the praise of posterity are surely but vain and unsubstantial. With far more limited resources, how many princes have surpassed him in improving the condition of mankind; with greater provocation, how many rulers have been less vindictive and remorseless. How many faults must be veiled from the sight, how many errors must be overlooked, before his title of “The Great” can be considered valid. Who, in contemplating such a character as his, is not compelled to confess—

“In him how guilt and greatness equal ran,
And all that raised the hero sank the man.”

The first question naturally suggested for consideration, is, what influence did Louis XIV. exercise in producing the Revolution? and to answer this satis-

factorily, his conduct must be examined from three different aspects. First, we must investigate his public actions ; secondly, his method of administering the government ; and, thirdly, the efforts he employed to advance the progress of civilization. By far the most honourable and meritorious portion of the career of Louis, is that in which Colbert occupied a prominent position in the royal councils. Possessing that talent peculiar to great minds, of making all who come within the circle of their magic influence insensibly adopt their views and execute their purposes, Colbert, through the instrumentality of Louis, governed France with admirable effect. Although not always successful in controlling the heated passions and impetuous temper of his royal master, yet his advice was, for the most part, listened to, and the policy which he recommended generally pursued. After the death of this eminent statesman the misfortunes of the king commenced ; no longer instructed by the wholesome precepts of economy, or restrained within the bounds of prudence, by the admonitions of a superior intelligence, that disastrous policy was entered into which drained the kingdom of its resources, and almost brought the forces of combined Europe to the gates of Paris. As Henry VIII. committed the greatest errors of his life after the fall of Wolsey, so did Louis XIV. after the death of Colbert. Temerity then took the place of circumspection ; presumptuous ignorance that of solid wisdom ; and, in either instance, events resulted which have left an indelible stain upon the pages of history, and shocked the common feelings of humanity in every succeeding age.

The darkest crimes to which Louis XIV. must plead guilty, are the European wars he necessitated, by his unprincipled conduct in all international negotiations, and that discreditable act of intolerance—the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Not content with enjoying undisputed authority over his own dominions, he was constantly aiming at extending their boundaries, by a most unjust spoliation of the contiguous states and principalities. Possessing an army of nearly half a million of men, and supplied with almost inexhaustible resources by the economic measures of Colbert and the arbitrary nature of his government, he advanced to undertake the conquest of universal Europe. The territorial aggrandizement of France ever remained his fondest desire; he annexed Franche Comté, Alsace, and a portion of Flanders to the monarchy—he invaded Holland—he devastated the Palatinate—he opened the gates of Savoy, to harass Northern Italy: at length, in the Spanish Succession War, he roused all Europe to form a powerful and successful league against him. Always the aggressor, war was in his hands rather a weapon used for tyranny and persecution, than the instrument of a just and honourable revenge. In spite of the panegyrics and eulogies with which the courtier and the poet, beneath the shady avenues of Versailles, were wont to applaud his victorious arms, the judgment of posterity has decided against him; and that honest censure, which the threatening dungeon could for a time arrest, has at last been pronounced. What can be said of the man who directed the cities of the

Palatinate to be rased to the ground, because a bystander suggested that it was necessary to place a desert between the frontier and the forces of the enemy? What can be said of the man who bribed Englishmen to betray the interests of their country, in order that he might carry into effect one of the vilest instances of oppression upon record? What can be said of the man who ordered the Dragonades—who caused innocent women and helpless children to be driven from their homes—who commanded protestant priests to be hunted like beasts in the forests and broken upon the wheel by hundreds, under the most cruel tortures imagination can conceive—who banished fifty-thousand families from his dominions, and sent them forth from prosperity and happiness to poverty and exile? What can be said of such a man, except that he was a hero in the cause of crime; a monster, only protected from the vengeance and the scorn of mankind, by wearing the purple robe of power.

The wars of Louis XIV. were undertaken solely for the aggrandizement of the French monarchy. To render France the arbitress of Europe; to regulate everything by her will; to make her the preponderant weight in the diplomatic balance, were the unceasing objects of the policy dictated in the council chambers of Versailles. It was not that Louis struggled to vanquish the principle of free enquiry in the European states, by causing them to substitute that of pure monarchy. He did not show himself eager to abase Republicanism in England, or to repress Protestantism

in Holland. It was not for these purposes that he entered the field of battle, and threw down the gauntlet of defiance. What he aimed at rather, was to make France the predominant power in Europe; to elevate her to a marked superiority; to enable her to say to the other states, "League, unite, combine as you may, your influence will have no effect, your forces will have no avail." And for a period, this haughty language was adequately supported; for a period, Louis veritably governed and coerced Europe. The triumphs of injustice are, however, usually precarious and uncertain; they last but for a season, and glitter only for the moment; often when they appear the most permanent, they are in reality the least secure. The crafty diplomacy of Barillon, the refined tergiversations of Torcy, and even the acknowledged skill of Luxembourg, were destined to yield in the contest to the honest frankness of Temple, the undaunted energy of William III., and the matchless genius of Marlborough. The cause of independence ultimately triumphed over tyranny; and the monarch who could once by a single stroke of the pen command kingdoms to be ravaged, and cities to be laid desolate, found himself at last compelled to address one of his generals in noble but instructive words: "I reckon on going to Peronne, or St. Quentin, gathering there every disposable troop, wherewith to make a last effort, for never could I remain a witness of the enemy approaching my capital." A century was to elapse, and then upon the marble steps of Fontainebleau, another, and even more ambitious soldier, was destined to part with.

the shattered remnant of his fortunes, under the terrible reverse of a similar retributive punishment.

We have already remarked the striking injustice of the causes for which Louis XIV. placed the French nation in hostile opposition to all the principal European courts; but what aggravated the evils of his policy in a ten-fold degree, was the enormous addition thus made to the National Debt. From the death of Colbert, until the Revolutionary epoch actually commenced, the history of French Finance shows one progressively increasing deficit, and scarcely before the disorders of the treasury were irretrievably hopeless, did a single minister attempt to rectify the evil, by proposing any wise or comprehensive measures of relief. Each financier successively introduced to the cabinet, and their numbers were not a few, appeared to act as though "Sufficient for the day, is the evil thereof" was the maxim they kept constantly in view; and the only occasion upon which they ever condescended to take a prospective glance, with reference to the monetary affairs of the nation, was in spending the revenue by anticipation, before the farmers general had begun to collect it. The ordinary qualifications required from candidates aspiring to obtain this highly responsible office, were an inability and incompetence to fill the higher departments of the state; hence, many who shrank from the idea of accepting a diplomatic appointment, considered themselves peculiarly adapted to undertake the management of the finances; and in proportion as they were ignorant of the rudimentary principles of political economy, did their presumption

and temerity increase. Their fame generally extended in an inverse ratio to their virtue and ability, all financial dexterity then being estimated by the rapidity with which a minister could amass a fortune at the expense of the state. The administration of Sir Robert Walpole, as well as that of the Pelhams', each display an extraordinary amount of disgraceful peculation with the English Finances; but even the gross misapplications of the public money, and the flagitious briberies of the public servants, countenanced by these ministers, appear almost in the light of honest transactions, when contrasted with the robberies from which the French treasury suffered during the reign of Louis XIV. and his immediate successor. It would, perhaps, be difficult to point out any minister, whose conduct has been so discreditable and immoral as that of D. Emery and Fouquet, when the Finances were committed to their superintendence. They taxed the unfortunate people to the uttermost possible extent, yet could furnish no accounts even to the king of the manner in which the proceeds were expended; when they could no longer extort fresh supplies, they created new offices and put them up to sale, applying the profits to their own personal advantage. In fine, to such an extent did Fouquet at length transgress, that Louis was compelled to order his arrest, whilst being entertained at his chateau as a guest.

One man, however, deserves to be honourably distinguished from the common herd of these venal officials. And this is Colbert, the Cecil of France. Finding, upon his accession to power, the finances of

the monarchy heavily embarrassed by the errors of his predecessors, he immediately conceived some judicious economic measures; and by a brilliant administrative talent, succeeded in collecting a surplus disposable revenue of double the amount required to liquidate the current interest of the debt. Never, since the days of Sully, had such method and regularity been observed in the levy and disbursement of the public money, as during the financial administration of this estimable man; and, even to this hour, several national works are visible, which attest the excellence of his judgment, and bear witness to the greatness of his genius. Although upon his death the state coffers were amply filled with the resources, accumulated by his prudent management and sagacious economy, these treasures were soon exhausted in the ruinous wars which ensued. Chamillart, Pourtarchain, Voisin, and Desmarets, successively attempted to restore financial order, and re-establish credit—but all in vain, for so reduced were the national finances on the eve of the battle of Malplaquet, that the royal plate was sent to the Mint, to keep the army in the field; and at the death of Louis, the National Debt had reached the prodigious amount of £130,000,000, with the government bills standing at eighty per cent discount. Such is the difference between able and incompetent financiers. So ruinous to a state is war. Even Louis himself, when addressing his last admonitions to the Dauphin, appears to have been conscious of his own errors: “Seek,” said he, “peace, as the source of every good; war, as the source of every evil.

My example, in this respect, is not a good one; do not imitate it, it is that part of my reign which I most repent."

The Protestant Reformation has never been adopted in France, except by a very limited proportion of the population; at no period of history has it been universally received there, or acknowledged as the national religion. Possessed of an enthusiastic and imaginative genius, of ardent passions, and excitable feelings, of a nature highly susceptible of impulse, and spontaneously inclined to mysticism, credulity, and superstition, the French people have always entertained a dislike to that rigid asceticism and saintly puritanism, which an adherence to the doctrines of the Huguenot faith requires. Hence, in a numerical point of view, the French Protestants, as compared with the Catholics, have ever been strikingly insignificant; and even when Protestantism attained its meridian influence in France, a tenth-part of the entire population were never included in its congregations. At the close of that disastrous epoch, in which the civil and religious wars had rendered France a battle-field for half a century—in which the Protestants disgraced themselves by the Conspiracy of Amboise, and the Catholics shocked the world by the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew—in which a Montmorenci and a Guise, a Coligni and a Conde, perished for the defence of their religion, the great Henry was, at length, enabled, by the defeat of the League, to effect an amicable pacification between the rival factions, and bring them both in obedience to the crown. The *ordonnance* by which

the claims of the contending parties were thus finally adjusted, was known as the Edict of Nantes ; and, owing to its wise and temperate regulations, as well as its tolerant character, the whole population of France, whether Catholic or Huguenot, were induced to lay aside the animosities of the past, and render themselves submissive to the government. Acting under the advice of De Thou, Henry, in negotiating the terms of the Edict, granted very favourable privileges to the Huguenots, who, it must be admitted, were not over scrupulous in observing the bounds prescribed by this conciliatory law. Instead of contenting themselves with a quiet observance of their peculiar forms of religious worship, they were perpetually harassing the civil government, by entering into diplomatic communications with foreign courts ; and so perplexing did these leagues with the different European states at length become, that Richlieu felt himself compelled to erase the more objectionable parts of the Edict, still, however, leaving the Huguenots sufficient latitude for the practice of their religion, but effectually preventing them from disturbing the political affairs of the state.

Considering the marked numerical inferiority of the Protestants, and their vexatious attempts to embarrass the government, religious liberty was, perhaps, as extended during the early part of the reign of Louis XIV., as the exigencies of the time would admit. The complete eradication of the Huguenot faith in France had long however been a favourite project with the more bigoted members of the Romish hierarchy, who,

not content with laws, which permitted at the most but a bare toleration of the Reformed Religion, desired to effect its total extinction. Colbert was the great obstacle in preventing the execution of these designs, for toleration had ever been a cardinal point in the policy of this great minister; and so long as the Huguenots committed no flagrant violations of the law, their religious heresies found no disfavour in his sight. The death of this great man at length enabled the Catholic party to throw aside the mask of pretended amity, and put their vindictive designs in execution. Louvois, the new minister, Madame de Maintenon, the king's mistress, and Pere le Chaise, his Jesuit confessor, all being favourable to the cause of intolerance, a ready channel was thus at once opened to the royal ear; and that spirit of hostile bigotry, which had hitherto been confined to the closet of the priest, spread with redoubled energy through the saloons of the court. The death of the Queen, after a lingering illness, had not been without its lessons to Louis, who though often represented as a heartless sensualist, was far from being incapable of genuine affections. A subsequent attachment to Madame de Maintenon, the widow of Scarron, the poet, entirely altered his character, by withdrawing him from those licentious amours, which were quite inconsistent with his dignity and position. Redeemed from a career of habitual vice, by the gentle admonitions of this virtuous woman, Louis appeared to be sincerely penitent; and having discarded his former mistresses, a seriousness of thought became visible in all his actions. His new instruc-

tress, however, was unfortunately not aware of the real influence she possessed, and hence frequently concurred in measures, which were totally at variance with her own sentiments, from a fear lest she should sacrifice that place in the royal affections which she had obtained. The king, who in reality confided much upon her judgement, was thus unconsciously led into errors, under a mistaken idea that her counsel was sincere, when, in truth, she was expressing opinions directly opposed to her own conscientious convictions. Even at the period, when the forcible conversion of the Huguenots was in contemplation, we find her writing to a confidential friend in these terms: "*The King has been told, that I was a Calvinist; and this induces me to approve of measures most opposite to my own sentiments.*" Such conduct must, however, be regarded as a blot upon a character otherwise faultless; for if Madame de Maintenon could not have averted the persecution, she might, at least, have attempted to render it less harsh and revolting. Louis, struck with feelings of remorse at the retrospect of his past life, and hoping to atone for his previous crimes by the zeal he was about to evince in the cause of the true religion, commanded the Edict of Nantes to be revoked, and the whole power of the crown, being thus directed against a feeble minority, the ruin of the Huguenots became inevitable. The intelligence of this triumph of intolerance was received with unbounded rapture and delight by the Romish priesthood, who, as they reported to the court innumerable conversions from the proscribed

religion, flattered the king, by styling his act the noblest service ever yet performed by an individual for the advancement and diffusion of the Catholic faith. Even Bossuët designated the work as "*le plus bel usage de l'autorité*," and every pulpit throughout France re-echoed these sentiments of adulatory praise.

The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes forms one of the darkest pages in the history of France. It marked the complete triumph of despotism over the first principles of all civil and religious liberty. It proved that nothing could withstand the arbitrary power of the crown—that absolutism aspired not only to control the actions of men, but their conscience also. It proved how easily a ruler, endowed with despotic authority, may pass from moderation to severity, from a system of temperate restraint to an unendurable tyranny. Lastly, it showed how dangerous power may become when intrusted to the uncontrolled direction of a single mind. Louis had, without question, originally persuaded himself that he should be able to effect the conversion of the Huguenots without proceeding to actual violence, but it is the very nature of absolutism to resort to military force if its dictates are disobeyed, or its decrees disregarded; and in proportion as the opposition shown to its declared will is the more stubborn, so will its measures of coercion and persecution be the more severe. This act of intolerance, accompanied as it was by such revolting deeds of cruelty and oppression, must always be regarded as one of the circumstances which exercised a material influence in producing the

Revolution. According to the most moderate computations, half a million of the population were either killed or driven into exile by the Revocation of the Edict; and it is supposed that at least a million professed a pretended conversion to the Catholic Church, to practise their own religion in silence and by stealth. The Huguenots had always been honourably distinguished by their industry and skill in manufactures, as well as by their prudent acquirement of wealth, qualities which were never overlooked by the discerning observation of Colbert, but which were wholly disregarded by his successor. Thus, owing to the banishment of this important class of the population, that industrial talent which had contributed so essentially to maintain the revenues of the state, was transferred to other countries; and those riches which had once formed the principal support of the monarchy, were flowing into the treasuries of hostile nations, whose rulers had leagued together to effect the ruin and humiliation of France. The same date which marks the exile of the Huguenots, also points to the commencement of those embarrassments in French finance, which were never entirely removed until the ruinous bankruptcy, arising from the depreciated *assignats* of the revolutionary crisis, caused public credit to be re-established upon a new and more substantial basis. England, Holland, and the Northern parts of Germany, derived immense advantages from the presence of the refugees, who found under the shelter of their more tolerant governments, an asylum beyond the reach of the malevolent bigotry of the priest, and the fiery persecution of the despot.

Independent, however, of the financial deficiencies consequent upon the expatriation of so many wealthy families, there were other evils resulting from this unjust and impolitic measure, which exercised a most prejudicial influence over the future. The Catholic clergy, having no longer a sectarian opposition threatening to encroach upon their congregations, or eager to dispute their doctrines, passed into a state of negligent apathy and complete indifference. Withdrawn from the arena of theological controversy, and from the gladiatorial conflicts of polemical discussion, they became lukewarm and apathetic. The weapons were no sooner laid aside than they began to rust; for nothing is so fatal to the progress of the human mind as an erroneous conviction that it has surmounted every obstacle and triumphed over every difficulty. The torpor of despotism seized upon the church, depriving it of freedom, of energy, and of life. A dominant hierarchy, corrupted by the possession of undisputed power, and satiated with the spoils of successful avarice, usurped that wealth which, according to the common principles of justice, should have been more equally distributed among the inferior clergy, who were, in reality, performing the whole duties of the church without receiving any of its emoluments. The vices of nepotism, simony, and plurality, prevailed to a shameful extent. Dignities were bestowed upon the minions of court favour and the parasites of princes. In the choice of candidates, ignorance proved no disqualification—learning no recommendation. The humble scholar, the zealous pastor, the earnest teacher,

were alike rejected and disregarded. Interest or birth were the only doors which opened to honour and preferment. Against the distinctions of genius and the claims of worth, the gates were surely closed. As the flagitious errors of the ecclesiastical establishment in the course of time became more and more palpable, religion itself fell into contempt; and that church which once numbered amongst its ornaments the eloquent Massillon and the pious Fenelon, was, ere long, destined to behold its mitred honours degraded and profaned by the presence of such scandalous and profligate characters, as the Abbé Terray and Cardinal Dubois.

The condition of the Huguenots after the Revocation of the Edict, was deplorable in the extreme. They had no legal existence; they enjoyed no civil privileges; they could neither marry nor be given in marriage, without their offspring being stigmatized as illegitimate; and even when they died, a secret interment was with difficulty obtained. Priests detected in the act of performing the rites of the reformed religion, were punished with death, and their hearers condemned either to perpetual imprisonment or the galleys. Rewards were offered for the fugitive pastors who had taken shelter in the mountains, and whoever harboured these offenders, was liable to the most severe penalties of the law. Even Catholic historians shrink from recounting the sanguinary horrors of this fiery and intolerant crusade, which could hardly have been pursued with greater rigour and severity had the unhappy victims been beasts of prey, instead of fellow-

citizens speaking the same language and springing from the same race as their infamous oppressors. The result of this fearful persecution was but too certain. Nearly a million Protestants remained in France, to profane a religion in which they did not conscientiously believe; and in proportion as Calvinism, when proscribed, faded from their hearts, Atheism and Infidelity began to occupy its place. The sceptic sprang up to attack the church, the reformer sprang up to attack the throne. Both assembled under one banner, and united, in what they deemed, a common cause. They began by demanding civil and religious liberty, they ended by overthrowing the throne and endeavouring to establish the "age of reason" upon the ruins of Christianity. Guilty as the popular party were, in the savage excesses and atrocious massacres they committed amidst the anarchy and fury of the Revolution, we must not the less turn back to the hideous scenes of carnage and conflagration which half depopulated Languedoc, and made the fertile valleys of Provence almost a ruin and a desert waste. In contemplating the revenge, we must not forget the provocation; in expressing our indignation at the severity of the punishment, we must not overlook the guilt of the original crime. The massacres of the Septembrists were preceded by the slaughters of the Dragonades. Before Robespierre rose to power, Louis XIV. had reigned.

Let us proceed to consider how far Louis XIV., in his administration of the government, contributed to bring about the Revolution. Montesquieu has

observed, that a wide distinction should be drawn between an absolute and a despotic monarchy, inasmuch as authority in the former, though exercised in an arbitrary manner, never exceeds the bounds of the law ; whereas, in the latter, it is not only arbitrary in the highest degree, but exercised quite irrespective of precedent, and independent of established law. Under Louis XIV., the French monarchy partook of an absolute rather than of a despotic nature, although we must admit, that this sovereign, by stretching the prerogatives of royalty to an undue extent, had, before the close of his career, so changed the character of the government, that it almost required to be classed under the latter denomination instead of the former. The kings of Dahomy or Ashantee could hardly issue more arbitrary and unconditional mandates, than were promulgated from the council-chambers of Versailles and Marly by Louis, in the declining years of his reign. "The king wills it," was sufficient to make twenty millions of people obey a decree, which, perhaps, half of them considered as odious and oppressive in the extreme. No government can count upon futurity, that does not possess stable institutions, which, by the nature of their construction, are durable, and almost admit of spontaneous action. Even absolute power cannot endure long without the aid of suitable political institutions ; and Louis XIV., by reducing the Parliament to the condition of a mere phantom, and annulling the true privileges and rights of its members, deprived the monarchy of its principal support and most efficient bulwark. As Mignet

has elegantly expressed the idea, "He wore out the main spring of absolute monarchy, by too protracted tension and too violent use."

In criticising the administration of Louis XIV., we shall first attempt to point out the advantages which he conferred upon France by his genius and ability; secondly, we shall animadvert upon the errors into which he was misled by following the instructions of evil counsellors, and by acting solely with reference to the consolidation and increase of his own personal power, instead of consulting the interest and welfare of posterity. From the death of Richlieu, to the final conclusion of the Fronde, France suffered all the evils consequent upon revolutionary disorder and internal anarchy. Factions struggled for power within—hostile forces stood ready to enter the frontiers from without. The court was a constant scene of conspiracy, intrigue, and cabal. The nobles were in a state of perpetual dissension, and eager for civil war. The Parliament had almost abdicated its powers, and ceased to perform its functions. Royalty was flying from palace to palace, without influence, without power. Authority was nowhere paramount. The kingdom lay at the mercy of the invader and the rebel. From this disastrous state, this prostrate and paralysed condition, Louis XIV. rescued France. Every year after he assumed the direction of affairs, we find society more progressive; public order better established; government more regularly and powerfully administered; intellectual activity more fully developed. Aided successively by the administrative talent of

Mazarin, of Colbert, and Louvois, he reorganised the government and regenerated the monarchy. He established a strong and permanent central power, that defied faction and crushed the serpent head of insurrection wherever it appeared. He caused the authority of the crown to be felt to the remotest confines of his dominions. He deprived the nobles of their ancient territorial power, by converting them into humble courtiers, dependent upon royal patronage and court favour. He disciplined armies which, for a time, rendered France the terror and the scourge of Europe, and made her name acknowledged and feared in every European court. He created an administrative system, that united the scattered and heterogeneous elements of society, to make them obedient and subservient to the central government. He remodelled the diplomatic service, and produced a perfect change in the character of foreign negotiations. He invested the executive with an authority such as had never yet been known, and from this resulted a government which, instead of wasting its time upon controlling factions and watching conspiracies, could direct its energies to the amelioration of the state, the encouragement of the arts, and the permanent advance of intellectual civilization.

If we closely examine the epoch of Louis XIV., how great are the social improvements which contemporary historians record. How wonderful the vast and comprehensive legislation, the innumerable ordinances, the valuable codes, which here take their origin, and prove the activity and energy displayed by the civil

government. How untiring the industry shown by the king and his ministers in discussing and remodelling the various measures required to render the work of official administration more perfect. Look at the Arsenals, the Harbours, the Canals, the Hospitals, the Academies, the Museums, which were then founded, erected, and endowed. Look at the impulse given to the progress of manufacture, of science, and of art. Look at the admirable system of discipline and regularity which pervaded every branch of the public administration—the roads—the forests—the posts—the marine and the military service. Look at the magnificent public works, such as the establishment of the Gobelins, and the Canal of Languedoc; the sumptuous palaces, and the splendid monuments of architecture; the Hotel des Invalides; the Louvre, and that marvel of princely state and oriental splendour, the chateau of Versailles. Look at the generals, the statesmen, the theologians, the poets, the artists, and the philosophers, who were the ornaments of that brilliant and illustrious court. Consider the works of those great men. Combine all these varied efforts of intellect, and contemplate them as a whole. Then we can form some idea of the grandeur of the age over which Louis Quatorze presided; then, indeed, we shall be unhesitatingly compelled to acknowledge the superiority of that mind, which for half a century could so animate genius to excel in its high purpose, which could so foster and direct talent to its proper destination, as to produce an era in the history of the world's civilization, an epoch that has ever been regarded by posterity with favour

and delight. Writers, prejudiced by a predilection for democratic principles, and actuated by a mean spirit of bitter hostility against royalty, under whatever aspect it may appear, have attempted to regard Louis XIV. as a mere nullity amidst that circle of transcendent genius by which he was constantly surrounded. More impartial historians will, however, admit that some merit was due to that refined taste, that discerning observation, and that indefatigable zeal, which could keep so many jarring and discordant elements of society in harmonious action, and regulate with precision the movements of so vast and complicated a machine. The panegyric with which Waller complimented the Lord Protector of the English Commonwealth, might have been addressed to Louis XIV. with an equal grace.

“ Still as you rise, the state exalted too,
 Knows no distemper while 'tis changed by you;
 Changed like the world's great scene! when without noise
 The rising sun night's vulgar lights destroys.”

But if such were the virtues of Louis XIV. in his administration of the public affairs, we must remember that he committed many errors also; and of these, perhaps, none were more conspicuous, or more culpable than the course which he pursued in reference to the Parliament of Paris. The right of the sovereign to levy taxation and decree the amount of the required subsidies without being compelled to obtain the previous sanction of any deliberative assembly, or the constant supervision of any national council, was the cardinal vice, the principal defect of the French Constitution, under the old regime of the eighteenth century; and

to deprive royalty of this unreasonable prerogative, by making the consent of some representative assembly of the people, a necessary prelude to taxation, became, unquestionably, the main purpose of the Revolution. We shall endeavour to prove that Louis XIV. was the chief offender in altering the constitution, so as to confer upon the monarchical power this arbitrary and irresponsible right to demand subsidies, without consulting any council or assembly whatever; and if sufficient evidence can be adduced to substantiate such an accusation, his conduct must be considered as having exercised a very material influence in necessitating the Revolution.

Let us premise our observations, by taking a brief retrospective glance over the history of the different means by which the revenues of the kingdom were raised. From the original convocation of the States General by Philip le Bel, in the year 1302, until the period of their final disusage in 1614, it had always remained a disputed point, whether the right to levy taxation belonged to them or to the crown. Sometimes the kings demanded subsidies without consulting the wishes, or soliciting the concurrence of the States; sometimes the States interposed with an authoritative tone, and directed the amount as well as the manner in which the necessary tallages were to be imposed. But whatever might be the eventual issue of this long-sustained controversy, without question, the original reason for inviting the Tiers Etat to form a separate order in the assemblies of the States General, was, specifically, for the purpose of inducing the deputies

producing the same effect

of the towns to sanction the levy of larger subsidies than could otherwise be obtained. As Pasquier observes, "He must be blind indeed, who does not see that the *roturier* was expressly summoned to this assembly, contrary to the ancient institutions of France, for no other reason, than that inasmuch as the burden was intended to fall principally upon him, he might engage himself so far by promise, that he could not afterwards murmur or become refractory." For a considerable period subsequent to the permanent establishment of the Third Estate, the right of levying and regulating the collection of taxes was regarded as belonging solely and indisputably to the three Orders of the States General, their unanimous decision being considered incontrovertible; and it was not until the fatal wars arising from the English invasion, had reduced France to the very verge of perdition, that the French monarchs attempted, by a forcible usurpation, to regain this important branch of their prerogative. Notwithstanding some severe contentions between the crown and the Tiers Etat, in which the former obtained a temporary advantage, such as the revolt of Marcel, the provost of the merchants in 1357, and the Cabochian riots of 1413, the States General had, prior to the reign of Charles VII., pretty uniformly maintained their right to be consulted, before any fiscal impositions or pecuniary aids could be levied upon the people. This monarch, however, after his successful expulsion of the English forces from the kingdom, contrived to retain a standing army of nine thousand men, under the pretence that future in-

vasions might be prevented by the protection thus afforded ; and as these regular troops maintained by the produce of a permanent tax, called the *taille*, were always ready to obey the commands of royalty, they rendered the sovereigns to a great extent independent both of the Parliaments, as well as the States General, The kings were naturally not backward in availing themselves of this powerful weapon to advance the interests of monarchical power ; and as the Tiers Etat possessed no force capable of contending with this body-guard of absolutism, the public liberties were soon sacrificed and destroyed. The English Commons have always shown a remarkable dread, lest their authority should be encroached upon by military power ; so much so, that William III. had actually drawn up a deed to declare his abdication in consequence of the very limited and insufficient force, which the Parliament proposed to furnish as a standing army for the defence of the kingdom. Louis XI., one of the most arbitrary monarchs that ever ruled France, frequently boasted that he could exact any amount of taxation he pleased, in defiance of the opinions expressed by the States General ; but under the reign of his successor, Charles VIII., the Tiers Etat made a determined effort to recover their lost privilege. "The States explicitly demanded that the *taille*, and all other arbitrary imposts should be abolished ; and that, from thenceforward, according to the natural liberty of France, no tax should be levied in the kingdom, without the consent of the States." Nothing could have apparently afforded the French nation brighter prospects

of attaining a constitutional government, admitting considerable liberty, than the manner in which this dignified and noble protest was at first received by the court. Time, however, did not realise such promising anticipations; for at the moment when victory appeared to be in the hands of the States, the court contrived, by a delicate manœuvre, to dissolve the assembly, and thus completely obstruct the ambitious but laudable advances of the popular party. This particular meeting of the States, seems to have been one of the most moderate and best conducted assemblies that had ever been convoked, since the admission of the commons to a participation of power; it was not disgraced by any of those massacres and revolts which have so often tarnished the banners of the popular cause in France; nor did it give rise to those rebellious outbreaks of democratic licentiousness, which compel even the truest partisans of constitutional freedom, to take refuge for a period in the citadel of despotism, or the fortress of arbitrary power. Of the many wise designs devised by this assembly, few ever arrived at the maturity of a practical application; for it appears to be almost a peculiar characteristic of the French people, that they know exactly how to project their plans for the attainment of civil liberty, but always manage to fail in the execution of their purpose. Perpetually occupied in ascending the steps which lead to the temple of Freedom, they are seldom to be observed worshipping at the shrine. Like Sisypheus, they no sooner roll the stone to the top of the precipice, than it bounds back again, leaving the same hopeless task to be renewed.

From the accession of Louis XII. to the death of Henri Quatre, the convocations of the States General became less frequent, and, when assembled, their labours were regarded with less esteem. Upon several occasions they publicly declared their incompetence to grant the subsidies required for the state revenues, and, at length, sank into a state of slavish subordination to the will of the court, which entirely deprived them of all dignity and proper consideration. Their aid, it is true, was occasionally solicited by the monarch, when the court found itself unusually embarrassed, but the three Orders generally wasted these opportunities in factious disputes, or pompous adulations of royalty, instead of attempting, by a temperate and matured deliberation on public affairs, to occupy that honourable position in the national councils to which they were justly entitled. Occasionally, the States in their blind and indiscriminate loyalty to the crown, sanctioned the perpetration of the most atrocious and diabolical of crimes ; thus, it was in the session of one of these assemblies and with the tacit consent of the three Orders, that Henry III. prepared such schemes as ensured the murder of the Duke and the Cardinal de Guise. Even writers who have uniformly expressed opinions favourable to the developement of a popular representative assembly in France, do not scruple to ridicule the inaptitude which the French people formerly displayed, whenever they attempted to establish a chamber for the discussion of national affairs ; thus, Necker sarcastically observes of the States, prior to their abandonment under Louis XIII. “ On inscrivoit

également les harangues, et ces harangues ressembloient a des déclamations théâtrales plutôt qu'à des controverses sérieuses." In truth, after the States had surrendered to the crown the privilege of imposing taxation, their assemblies speedily fell into contempt; and their duties having at length dwindled down to a few empty formalities, such as the appointment of a regency upon the occurrence of a minority, or the settlement of polemical disputes, Richlieu, who was ever eager to increase the prerogatives of royalty and the influence of its ministers, advised Louis XIII. to place them completely in abeyance. Thus perished the States General, an institution, which, had its original authority been permanently maintained, might, perhaps, have kept the arbitrary power of royalty within natural and reasonable limits, or, at least, have served to mitigate and temper that despotic ambition of the crown, which ultimately proved the ruin of the monarchy.

When the privilege of the States General to regulate the levy of taxation had been violated and rendered invalid by the injudicious extension of royal power, the Parliaments stepped forward to increase their influence, as well as to serve in some degree as the depositaries of public opinion. These efforts to exalt the character and enlarge the prerogative of the Parliaments, were eminently successful; and from the commencement of the sixteenth century it became an established practice that all financial edicts should receive the sanction of these tribunals, before the farmers general of the revenue could proceed to enforce

them. Although the disusage of the States General must be regarded as one of the greatest misfortunes that ever happened to the French nation, yet the Parliaments formed for a long series of years a very tolerable substitute; and as the members of these courts were neither nominated through the influence of royal favour, nor elected by the suffrage of any popular assembly, their independent authority often proved a very serviceable barrier to keep the prerogatives of the crown within reasonable bounds. The Parliament of Paris, which was by far the most important of these judicial courts, consisted of one hundred and seventy members, including seventeen Peers, and two Princes of the Blood; and as the purchase of a seat in this particular assembly required the candidates to be in possession of very considerable property, they generally belonged to the higher and well-educated classes of the community. Independent of the Parliament of Paris, there were twelve Provincial Parliaments constructed upon similar principles, and endowed with nearly the same privileges, but the former exercised an appellant jurisdiction over these local courts, and usually took the initiative in all contests and disputes with the crown. As the whole judicial business of the kingdom was transacted by these institutions, the members naturally became well versed in the laws and customs of the state, while the peculiar education they received preparatory to their official career, rendered them especially adapted to perform a prominent part in the superintendence of all general legislation. The great object of a repre-

sentative assembly in any legislature, being to afford a permanent organ through which public opinion can be safely and effectively brought to bear upon the executive government, we shall not, perhaps, be guilty of exaggerating the merit of the Parliaments, in saying that they performed this constitutional function upon many occasions with admirable success. Though confessedly inferior to such an institution as the English House of Commons, the Parliaments of Paris often evinced a steady and resolute determination in defending the public interests from the assaults of despotism; so much so, that when we consider the dark catalogues of trouble and rebellion which have invariably marked all attempts to establish a Third Estate in France, one might almost feel inclined to conclude that these anomalous and amphibious tribunals afforded as great an expansion of popular liberty in reference to matters of legislation, as the French people will ever prove themselves worthy to enjoy.

From the period when the Parliaments acquired sufficient influence to control and modify the imposts proposed by the crown, they had often displayed a meritorious independence of conduct in endeavouring to equalise the system upon which taxation was raised, and also to render the exactions of the crown less onerous and oppressive. As it was an established custom, subsequent to the reign of Louis XI., that no tax could be levied by the royal will until the members of the Parliament had consented to enregister the decree upon their books, this privilege materially tended to render the sovereigns and their ministers

circumspect in the projection of all financial plans; and as the Parliaments by refusing to proceed with the judicial business of the kingdom, until the crown had acknowledged and respected their decision upon financial edicts, could almost arrest the wheel of government, these tribunals formed no inconsiderable obstacles in preventing an unjust taxation from being hastily and arbitrarily enforced. In the Revolt of the Fronde, the Parliaments, however, were at length vanquished; and having surrendered their right to deliberate upon matters of finance, it required but little energy on the part of such a powerful monarch as Louis XIV., to annihilate the scanty remnants of their authority. Nothing less than a monopoly of power would satisfy the haughty spirit of this imperious ruler, who imagined that he was born to govern France by divine right, and that the slightest opposition to his declared will was rebellious, if not impious. Like Alexander, he divided instead of untying the Gordian knot. He desired that no counterbalance whatever to his authority should exist; and as the Parliaments were not altogether silenced by the reverses of the Fronde, he determined to make their complete humiliation a corner-stone in the fabric of absolutism he was about to raise. In 1655, the members of the Parliaments hesitated to register some financial edicts, and seemed for a moment animated with the spirit of their ancient independence. Louis, who was hunting at Vincennes, upon being informed of their refractory opposition to his will, galloped direct to the Palace of the Parliament, and entering the

Hall with a whip in his hand, thus addressed the trembling magistrates: "Gentlemen, every one is acquainted with the ill consequences of your former assemblies. Their recurrence must be prevented. I command you instantly to cease busying yourselves with my edicts. And you, Mr. President, I forbid either to call or suffer such assemblies." The legists listened with marked attention while these arrogant commands were delivered; they knelt in silence and obeyed. The Parliaments sank into insignificance and contempt. As Richlieu had destroyed the States General, so Louis XIV. humbled the Parliaments; and for sixty years the royal decrees were registered, without so much as a murmur or remonstrance being heard within the walls of these submissive councils. Possessing an all powerful army, upon whose loyalty he could fully rely, Louis determined, after the death of Mazarin, that the whole authority of the state should emanate from himself alone, and that his edicts should neither be mutilated by Parliaments, nor canvassed and discussed by deliberative assemblies. *L'état c'est moi*, formed the alpha and the omega of his system of administration; "*il ordonna que ses lois fussent enregistrées purement et simplement sans modification, sans restriction, sans clause, qui en pussent surseoir ou empêcher la pleine et entière exécution.*" This degradation of the Parliaments, though not productive of immediate ill effects, could not but exert an unfavourable influence with reference to the future progress of political liberty—for it is the nature of absolutism to follow up one victory by another, until nothing is left

upon the field capable of disputing its supremacy, or of confronting its power. Had the nobles and the clergy afforded a generous and energetic support to the Parliaments, it would have been impossible for royalty to have defied the combined forces of such a formidable coalition; but, unhappily, these elements could never find a leader equal to repress their hostile ambitions, or form them into one compact body, so as to wield and direct their united energies for the accomplishment of a single purpose. "Every order for its own interests" was the prevailing maxim, and hence the crown invariably triumphed whenever individual classes attempted to rebel. "*Divide et impera*" had long been the policy of the court, since, to preserve the entirety of absolute authority, it was essential to keep all rivals at variance with each other, instead of permitting them to gain strength by union, or power by concord.

Although we are fully prepared to admit, that the French monarchs under the old regime did not always exercise their authority to the full extent permitted by the established laws of the kingdom, yet we cannot fail to observe, that they were occasionally seduced to perform despotic acts of tyranny, by the dangerous temptations which were constantly placed before them in the shape of such prerogatives as the *lit de justice*, the *lettres de cachet*, and the power of enforcing torture and solitary confinement, as a punishment for real or suspected criminal offences. The *lit de justice*, or Bed of Justice, originally signified nothing more than the mere couch upon which the monarchs sat,

when they thought proper to be present in the Parliament during its ordinary sessions; but after the members of this court had secured to themselves the right to question the propriety of the royal edicts, and delay their registration, this term became used to designate a new prerogative, which the sovereigns invented for the purpose of keeping the Parliaments in subjection. If the magistrates proved themselves refractory, and obstinately refused to register particular edicts, the monarchs entered the Parliament in person, and commanded their decrees to be accepted and enregistered during their presence. When such a proceeding had taken place, the kings were described as having held "a Bed of Justice." As the right of introducing all new legislative measures belonged solely to the crown, and as the sovereign did not possess the power either to dissolve the Parliament or to change the members, it is evident, that if this court chose to be perversely obstinate, no progress whatever could be made in matters of legislation, unless some extraordinary and arbitrary authority was vested with the executive, for the express purpose of coercing the Parliament when such a dilemma occurred. The *lit de justice* was intended to meet this extreme necessity, but when originally instituted, it was never supposed that the monarchs would have recourse to this arbitrary prerogative, unless public opinion and public interest were strongly opposed to the course which the magistrates pursued. Louis XIV., however, wilfully misinterpreted the nature of these Beds of Justice, by resorting to them whenever

the Parliaments either showed the slightest disposition to criticise his policy, or expressed the least hesitation in registering his decrees. He left the magistrates no discretionary power whatever, but treated them as though they were wholly unworthy to be consulted upon public affairs, or to offer any opinions upon the conduct of the government. If the English sovereigns at the present day exercised their veto on all occasions when the Commons differed from the Ministry, they would only be imitating the course which Louis XIV. adopted in the French Parliament, by the unjustifiable construction which he put upon the nature of the *lit de justice*. Some of the highest constitutional authorities in France have maintained, that the Beds of Justice were a gross violation of the rights of Parliament, and that the sovereigns, in resorting to them, were guilty of illegally stretching the royal prerogative, and stepping beyond the prescribed circle of their authority. We cannot, however, concur in these opinions, because it is clear that unless a preponderant power existed, either in the Crown or the Parliament, these institutions must have occasionally come into collision with forces so exactly balanced, that the whole machinery of government would have been arrested and disorganised. To our view, the *lit de justice* was a prerogative which the crown had a legal right to exercise, but which was intended to be used only on extreme emergencies, such as when the magistracy evinced a stubborn determination in acting contrary to the public interests of the state, or in thwarting the reasonable demands of the executive.

That the Bed of Justice was a dangerous instrument in the hands of a Prince, disposed to adopt an arbitrary method of government, no one can doubt, nevertheless, in the French constitution as then framed, this prerogative formed an indispensable attribute of royal power. To exercise so delicate a function with wisdom and discretion required, however, the presence of a St. Louis rather than a Louis Quatorze, the prudence of a Sully rather than the impatience of a Louvois.

It was the misfortune of France that her public men had, from feelings of loyalty and respect, so exaggerated the importance and inviolability of the kingly office, as to render the developement of civil liberty impossible. Clothed with almost irresponsible authority, the sovereigns possessed a complete control over the lives and property of the people, for though the power of the crown was defined as being bounded in its prerogatives by the law, we must remember, at the same time, how slight were the impediments which required to be removed, before the crown could alter the law also. Even the scales of justice were held with an unsteady hand—the innocent could be punished to satisfy the vengeance of a courtier, the guilty could be pardoned by the smiles of a mistress, or the intercessions of a favourite; at length the lenity of the king remained the sole precarious barrier that served to protect the liberties of the subject from the most revolting and inhuman persecutions of tyranny and oppression. In the present day, we can hardly form a conception of the reverence with which the French people formerly bowed down

before royalty. They regarded their king as the viceroy of Christ—the image of God upon earth. They looked upon him as a being raised above worldly influence and worldly passions, as a lawgiver, a spectator, and a judge, as an abstraction, an epitome of humanity. They considered his power an inherited and inalienable right; his will as superior to a combination of all individual wills; in fine, they worshipped him as the personification of order, wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth. If we consult the documents of various epochs, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, we invariably find that these extravagant ideas respecting the power of royalty universally prevailed; even to this day it is the abstract theory of the English constitution, that the king is the supreme judge, the sole owner of the land, and that he can neither mean nor do any wrong. The Chancellor, L' Hopital, in opening the States General, during the minority of Charles IX., thus expresses the views then entertained respecting royalty: “The king does not hold his crown from us, but from God and the ancient laws of the kingdom. He gives and distributes places and honours to those whom it pleaseth him, so that no one ought or can ask of him the wherefore: we are but counters in his hands, to which sometimes he gives value, at others renders as nothing. The duty of subjects is to obey in true obedience, that is to say, to keep his true and perpetual commandments, in other words, his ordinances. No one is equal to him, all being bound by such laws and ordinances save the king alone.” Let us pass over two centuries, and search for farther evidence. In the

memoirs of Madame du Hausset, the mistress of Quesnay, the celebrated founder of the Economists, we discover from the following conversation, what a degree of arbitrary power subjects attributed to their monarchs in the eighteenth century. It appears that Madame du H. one day meeting Quesnay in a state of evident embarrassment, after he had retired from an interview with the king, enquired the cause of his mental discomposure. "*Madame,*" replied the doctor, "*je suis sorti a quarante ans de mon village et j'ai bien peu d'experience du monde auquel je m'habitué difficilement. Lorsque je suis dans un chambre avec le roi, je me dis. voila un homme qui peut me faire couper la tête et cette idee me trouble.*" The lady, to console the physician, proceeds thus to answer him: "*Mais la justice et la bonte du roi ne devoient-elles pas vous rassurer.*" And this sensible rejoinder contained the sole guarantee of liberty that the French nation possessed prior to the Revolution. The goodness and mercy of the king, alone stood between them and the scaffold or the wheel—between the cause of innocence and the most ignominious punishment that a tyrannical or licentious ruler might choose to inflict.

Upon the decline of the feudal system of jurisprudence in Europe, royalty everywhere assumed increased prerogatives to regulate the administration of justice; but this enlarged authority of the sovereigns, though at first legally obtained and impartially exercised, became, in the lapse of time, illegally extended and corruptly administered. Even in England, where

feudalism had never struck its roots very deeply into the soil, we may observe that a marked retrogression in the purity of judicial administration was effected by the hand of absolute royalty, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Instead of enjoying a state of tolerable liberty, the people became subjected to the most odious practices of tyranny and extortion ; and in proportion as the kings had less to fear from the independence of a feudal aristocracy, did the severity and injustice of their abominable persecutions increase. When the Plantagenet monarchs reigned, they might be tried in courts of law, like any of their subjects. A chief justice, in the reign of Henry IV., did not scruple to commit the king's son to prison for contempt of court. One of the leading provisions in Magna Charta, was a clause to confer upon the people an immunity from arbitrary imprisonment. It was under the Tudor sovereigns that royalty advanced to the destruction of the national liberties, by assuming a right to dispose of life and property, according to the decision of commissioners, who were nominated, appointed, and directly influenced by the crown. Henry VIII. caused his queens to be beheaded upon the most frivolous and groundless charges. Mary burnt heretics without trial like faggots. Elizabeth condemned a man to have his arm cut off for a libel, which was certainly neither of a treasonable, nor seditious nature ; whilst the execution of her rival can scarcely be designated as anything but a legal murder. The Stuarts, equally tenacious of arbitrary power, were guilty of committing the most flagrant acts of

injustice. James I., to gratify feelings of personal animosity, condemned Sir Walter Raleigh to be executed upon a sentence which had been passed fifteen years, before, and subsequent to which, this renowned Englishman had actually received a commission from the Crown. Charles I. transgressed beyond the bounds of endurance. In that terrible tribunal, the Star Chamber, his ministers and agents destroyed the very name of justice. He imprisoned Bishop Williams for three years, and fined him £8000, for merely receiving and keeping a letter in which some opprobrious epithets were applied to the Primate. He caused the house of Sir Edward Coke to be ransacked, to obtain the private papers of that eminent lawyer, merely upon the authority of an order in Council. He condemned Prynne to have his ears cut off, and his nose slit, for having written a pamphlet which was considered libellous by anticipation. He pilloried, fined, imprisoned, and exercised all kinds of cruelty upon Bastwick and Burton, after subjecting them to a mock trial, at which no counsel could summon up sufficient courage to advocate their cause. There are, however, bounds beyond which even tyranny cannot advance without being hurled from the throne of power; and in the Great Rebellion, royalty suffered that retributive punishment which had been so often prophesied, and so long foretold. After the Restoration, Clarendon again resorted to the old system of illegal imprisonments, until the institution of the Habeas Corpus Act finally precluded the possibility of such a grievous wrong being permanently restored

to practice. James II. attempted to re-establish the absolute power of the crown ; and it was during the brief career of his despotic authority, that Judge Jeffries committed those judicial enormities which have fixed such a lasting and ineradicable stigma upon his name. The Revolution of 1688 followed. That second Magna Charta the Bill of Rights, with its appendix the Act of Settlement, then secured the liberties of the subject, and finally placed them beyond the reach of arbitrary power. The last stones were laid upon the temple of civil freedom ; and that paladium of liberty, an English Court of Justice, arose upon the ruins of regal despotism.

In France, the epoch that witnessed the perfect triumph of pure royalty, commenced at a much later period than with us ; hence, when the English people were engaged in asserting the cause of popular right, against that of royal prerogative, by open rebellion and civil war, the French sovereigns were enjoying an undisputed possession of all the attributes and privileges of absolute authority. The reason of this disparity between the two nations, is to be sought in the origin and peculiar formation of their governments. In England, the introduction of feudalism was effected by forcible means ; it was, at most, but a Norman branch, grafted upon the original Saxon stock ; and as the barons never acquired whole counties, nor individually attained that formidable independence, which eventually proved so prejudicial in France, the task of consolidating the regal authority became materially simplified, and much more easily

accomplished. After the Wars of the Roses, we hear but little more of the feudal nobles, the influence of these magnates having been effectually undermined and destroyed, by the furious contentions in which the rival factions of York and Lancaster were then engaged to obtain the supreme power. Whatever this destructive struggle had left undone in point of reducing the martial strength of the nobility, Henry VII., by his artful and cautious policy, completed. He permitted the barons to break the entails of their estates, and part with their territorial possessions. He restricted the number of their feudal retainers to very narrow limits, by an express statute. He encouraged agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, thus augmenting the revenues of the state. He hoarded up vast sums of money in the royal treasury, to be available in case of rebellion. Lastly, by administering justice and executing the laws with a severe and unscrupulous hand, he confirmed the authority of the crown, and rendered the English government one of the most absolute monarchies in Europe. In France, feudalism was purely indigenous in its origin. The barons enjoyed at first a complete and sovereign independence, often, indeed, superior to that of royalty itself; they held territories perfectly distinct and separate from the royal domains, and as the kings, when engaged in uniting these fiefdoms to the central monarchy, met with innumerable obstacles and impediments, the establishment of the absolute authority of the crown, occurred there at a much later period than in England. It was not until the reign of Henri Quatre, that

royalty had deprived the nobility of their feudal power, and began to infringe upon the jurisdiction of the Parliaments, since, prior to the accession of this Prince, the crown was perpetually harrassed by the leagues and insurrections of the nobles, while Rocheflavin reckons, that between the year 1562 and the year 1589, the Parliament refused to verify more than a hundred edicts issued by the kings. The interval between this reign and that of Louis XVI. embraces the era when pure royalty attained its greatest expansion in France; the age of Louis XIV. may, perhaps, be regarded as the epoch in which absolutism culminated to the zenith of its course, and shone forth in its fullest meridian splendour, since during the career of Louis XV., the Parliaments regained something of their ancient freedom, and aspired to lessen the exorbitant prerogatives which the crown had acquired by the abasement and humiliation of every other political institution. As the French sovereigns came to enjoy absolute authority at a later and more civilized period, they exercised arbitrary power with a much greater degree of lenity and forbearance, than the Tudors and Stuarts of English royalty had displayed in the preceding century; indeed, if we except the heretical persecutions of Louis XIV., it would be difficult to point out many instances of extreme cruelty or oppression practised by the French kings, in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. The punishments they inflicted were more vexatious than tyrannical; and although great emphasis has always been laid upon the Bastille, with its dungeons and

instruments of torture, we believe that these weapons of arbitrary power were, for the most part, temperately used. Ravallac and Damiens, after the heinous crimes they committed, suffered a punishment which in the present day would be regarded with one universal feeling of horror and disgust, yet we are convinced, that upon each of these occasions, the great mass of the French people not only approved of the sentence, but would, if possible, have increased its severity. Such examples of judicial cruelty as those inflicted upon Lally and La Barre, admit of no extenuation, but they were offences to be attributed to the conduct of the Parliament rather than the crown, while the fate of Admiral Byng proves that in England justice was then administered with hardly a less merciful hand.

But although the French monarchs under the old regime may be absolved from the charge of having inflicted those revolting and inhuman tortures upon their subjects, with which they are so often charged by the advocates of republican principles, yet we are by no means insensible to the errors and imperfections that arose from the arbitrary system upon which their judicial government was conducted. That government harboured many gross and flagrant abuses; it often permitted crimes to pass under its observation unpunished; it occasionally deprived innocent people of their liberty to suit factious purposes, or to gratify vindictive passions. It was the slave of corruption. It could stoop to receive or offer bribes; it could sacrifice an honest cause to pander to the smiles of harlots. It could warp the course of justice at the dictation of a

mistress or the frowns of a strumpet. It was based upon no sound moral principle. It did not seek to guide its decisions by the unerring light of truth. It made no efforts to administer the laws in an equitable and humane spirit, but dispensed the decrees of justice, like marketable commodities, to the highest bidder. Instead of being impartial, it was often prejudiced; instead of being calm, it was heated with malevolence and passion; instead of being inclined to mercy, it was full of animosity and revenge; instead of being candid and open, it loved to work in secret and suspicion. Corrupted and degraded, prostituted to the meanest and the worst of purposes, it became at length a mere instrument of vengeance in the hands of Royalty, to be used against all who rendered themselves obnoxious to the Court, against every one whose talents could prove dangerous to the interests, or whose presence could prove adverse to the welfare of absolute authority. A government in which justice was so perverted, and power so abused, hurried the monarchy with ten-fold rapidity towards destruction. Like the wheel of the chariot, it warmed into combustion by the impetus of its force and the velocity of its speed. Nothing but the accidental spark of rebellion was needed to set the whole on fire.

The administration of justice under Louis XIV., was infinitely more correct than under his successor. Nevertheless, the crown then possessed the right to exercise many arbitrary prerogatives, which were perfectly incompatible with the existence of a free government. One of the most dangerous of these

privileges was the *lettres de cachet*, or the power which royalty enjoyed to issue warrants for the arrest and imprisonment of persons without subjecting them to any previous trial, or even informing them of the accusations upon which they had been deprived of liberty. A weapon so despotic in its nature, and so capable of misapplication, naturally demanded great prudence and circumspection from those to whom its exercise was entrusted, and as the ministers could avail themselves of this formidable engine, in the absence of the sovereign, and without asking his consent, many serious acts of injustice were committed by such persons as were admitted within the circle of royal confidence. That it was frequently abused, we possess innumerable proofs, many of the occasions upon which it was employed being in the highest degree ridiculous and absurd. Thus, a gentleman remarking of one of the barrier towns which Louis XIV. had lost, "*Aussitôt perdue que gagnée*," found himself the next morning comfortably lodged in the Bastille. Everybody is familiar with the story of the Man in the Iron Mask, who was consigned to the fate of perpetual imprisonment by Louis XIV., and upon whom the guards were directed to fire if the disguise were removed, when the unfortunate prisoner attended mass. In the revolutionary crisis, one of the captives released by the surrender of the fortress to the Paris mob, imagined Louis XV. was still upon the throne, proving that occasionally the system of solitary confinement was strictly and rigidly enforced. During the reign of Louis Quinze, it is computed that not less than

twenty-five thousand persons, had, for longer or shorter periods, inhabited the dismal cells of this gloomy prison. Indeed, scarcely a single minister or official personage of note could then be found, who had not been immured in the Bastille by a *lettre de cachet* in the course of his career ; for no sooner had an unfortunate minister fallen into royal disfavour and been compelled to resign office, than he received a *lettre de cachet* from his successor, to prevent him from forming a constitutional opposition, or criticising the plans of the new official. Jansenists and Jesuits, members of the Parliament and ministers, philosophers and courtiers, were all by turns subjected to be chastised by this rod of the royal displeasure. The elder Mirabeau, Choiseul, Malesherbes, each paid the penalty of expressing their opinions too freely at court, or of offending those ladies who could

“ Grace with a smile, and ruin with a frown.”

The majority of these arbitrary imprisonments, were, however, rather nominal than real punishments, since they rarely extended beyond the term of a few days confinement ; the intercession of some lady in high favour at court, or the transmission of a handsome bribe to the ministers of the day, generally proving sufficient to unlock the dungeon bolts, and once more release the unhappy prisoner to the world. Confiscations of property, for the commission of slight offences, were occasionally resorted to by the crown, but, certainly, not to the oppressive extent they were practised by the English sovereigns. We can find no parallel instance of extortion to that of the London Merchant,

who was fined £5000 by Charles I., for saying in public that the English government was more despotic than that of Turkey.

Although the English monarchs, when pure royalty was at its greatest height in that country, exercised their authority by inflicting summary punishments upon isolated individuals with much more harshness and severity than did the kings of France, yet, whenever any attempts were made in England to oppress the whole body of the people by the levy of a rigorous taxation, the court soon discovered how exceedingly circumscribed and limited were the bounds to which the royal power could with safety advance. The truth is, that in England, the crown possessed no standing army, hence, whenever any exorbitant impost was proposed, the people rose up in general rebellion, and caused their rulers to withdraw the unpopular demand. Force was the umpire to which kings and subjects alike appealed; and unless the royal banners were defended by the majority, it would have been impossible to collect any tax. The halberds of the yeomen, and the train bands of the militia, supplied the place of public opinion. Even monarchs knew how to be wise in their generation. Henry VIII., apprehending a war with the Emperor Charles V., proceeded to levy an enormous subsidy from the clergy and laity of the realm by proclamation, but finding rebellions spring up on every side, he was glad to retract the claims he had made upon the people, and, notwithstanding their grievous offence, to grant them his most gracious pardon. Elizabeth upon the occasion of the Com-

mons petitioning her to abolish the monopolies of patents, at first refused to accede to their demands. A few days afterwards, however, having learned the temper of her subjects in this matter, she sent for the Speaker, and desired him to acquaint the House that she would immediately cancel the most odious and oppressive of the patents. A timely and graceful retreat, upon each of these occasions, prevented a collision, which might otherwise, to use the language of De Retz, "have struck the court in the apple of its eye." In France, as the power of royalty rested upon the support of a standing army, the sovereigns could afford to treat any unfavourable expressions of popular feeling with indifference, if not with contempt; and as the French troops were always remarkable for their loyalty and fidelity to the crown, insurrections, after the fall of the feudal nobility were exceedingly rare. The French army believing themselves enrolled purely to defend the honour and interests of the crown, were devotedly attached to their sovereign, and since the Court was the mirror to which every person of talent then turned for lustre and distinction, the soldier naturally came to regard royalty with especial favour. As Lord Chesterfield wittily observed in his day: "If you tell the French soldiers they are fighting for their king, they will fight till there is not one left alive; but if you were to tell them that they were fighting for their country, they would probably throw down their muskets and run away." The presence of an army so peculiarly organised as that of France under the ancient *regime*, formed a considerable ob-

stacle to the progress of all constitutional liberty. Its composition was admirably adapted for the purposes of national defence, while in the field its commanders had obtained the laurels of an European reputation. Conde, Turenne, and Luxembourg, were each generals of whom a nation might well feel proud, and whose fame, even to this day, few soldiers have ever been able to surpass. Yet, in a constitutional point of view, it cannot be denied but that such an army had a tendency to render the royal power despotic. The officers were uniformly selected from the privileged orders of society, who not only enjoyed a special immunity from taxation, but supported the absolute power of the crown from a natural identity of interests. The subordinate ranks were filled with men who remained satisfied so long as their pay was regularly forthcoming, and who, by keeping up little or no communication with the people at large, had lost all sympathy for the grievances of the inferior population. Protected and supported by this formidable body-guard, the sovereigns paid but little attention to the remonstrances of citizens, or the refractory opposition of Parliaments. A decree was no sooner issued from the council-chambers of the palace, than officers stood ready to put it into execution, however arbitrary might be its nature, and the protests of the the people or their leaders uniformly received the same answer—" *Le roi le veut obeir sur le champ.*" In the winter of 1709, when the nation was suffering from all the privations and severities of famine, the Parliament assembled to propose the appointment of deputies

for the purpose of visiting the different provinces and providing corn for the famishing inhabitants. Popular discontent ran high. Revolts broke out in several places. The supplies of food were nearly exhausted. The invading army of the allies stood close upon the frontier. The royal treasury was drained to its lowest ebb. Yet Louis XIV. sent the Chancellor to reprimand the Parliament, and tell the magistrates that they had as little to do with corn as with taxation.

Before however the conduct of Louis XIV., respecting the Parliaments or the States General, can be censured with severity, it is necessary to bear in mind the collateral circumstances of the epoch in which he lived. No error is, perhaps, more common, or more pregnant with injustice, than that of condemning the course others have pursued in a distant age, by bringing them to the bar of criticism as though they had enjoyed all the benefits arising from that subsequent experience of which the critic is in possession. At the time Louis XIV. reigned, the English House of Commons had displayed but little of that aptness for the administration of public affairs and the exercise of legislative powers, which are now palpable and historical facts. On the contrary, it was the scene of many violent and turbulent vicissitudes. Louis XIV. lived exactly at the period in which the English constitution was undergoing its most fundamental and organic changes; and when he contrasted the regularity attendant upon the arbitrary government over which he presided, with the tumultuous and anarchical proceedings of the English Commons, he might almost

be pardoned for preferring absolutism to anything resembling popular rule. Probably he regarded the history of the Rump and Barebones' Parliaments, with the same kind of contempt that an Englishman of the present day might feel towards those contemptible and miserable anarchists, who destroyed the Chamber of Deputies, to establish a debating club of visionary and speculative politicians upon its ruins. An English statesman might have been an ardent advocate for Parliamentary Reform in 1787, and yet consistently have voted against such a measure in 1797. He might in 1840 have desired to see an enlargement of the Electoral Franchise, whilst in 1850 he might rather have wished to make it more limited than more expanded. Such conduct and such opinions would be natural, and perfectly reconcileable to reason. A sailor does not select a hurricane to spread more canvass to the wind than his vessel had ever carried before. Nor are we to suppose that the reflecting portion of the French nation were indifferent spectators to the turbulent contentions and sanguinary crimes, which marked the troubled progress of the English Commons in their march towards the attainment of popular liberty. The French people had seen the life of Charles I. sacrificed upon the scaffold; they had seen the House of Peers declared useless and dangerous, and a vote passed for its abolition; they had seen an usurper dissolve parliaments and lock the door in the face of the members; they had seen a council of military officers substituted for the ancient Parliament of Kings, Lords, and Commons; they had

seen the reign of anarchy at length issue in the restoration of Royalty; they had seen the wild and lawless outbreak of those fanatics, the Fifth Monarchy Men; they had seen a second Stuart make their country a refuge and an asylum when driven from his throne, and, perhaps, with a full knowledge of the evils and miseries, which society had undergone in England during forty years of contention between the Crown and Parliament, they preferred submitting to the onerous taxation and arbitrary government of their ancient monarchy, rather than run the risk of imitating that pernicious anarchy which appeared to be the permanent doom of their neighbours. These appear reasons sufficiently forcible and valid to account for that patient and subservient spirit of obedience, which the French nation observed towards the absolute form of government imposed upon them by Louis XIV.; and, although no language can be too censorious or severe respecting the policy this monarch pursued, in destroying the *ancient* rights and *established* privileges of the Parliaments, yet it must be admitted that even he received but little encouragement from the contemporary history of other popular governments, to induce him to recall the States General, or to *increase* the authority of the Parliaments, by lessening and retrenching the prerogatives of the crown.

The age of Louis XIV. forms a distinct epoch in the history of European civilization.

“ Micat inter omnes
Julium sidus velut inter ignes
Luna minores.”

As the age of Leo X., rising upon the long dark night of feudal barbarism, ushered in the early dawn of modern refinement, so did that of Louis Quatorze unfold the morning splendours and the noontide glories of the intellectual day. Under the fostering influence of such a genial ray, the human mind, like a newly expanded flower, burst forth into sudden perfection. Glittering with a thousand colours, and scattering its fragrant odours to the winds, society displayed a freshness and a beauty, a luxuriance and a charm, which we who occupy the more sober and declining evening of the day can hardly imagine, or but faintly recognise. Yet amidst the palmy magnificence and sun-lit grandeur of that splendid scene, a watchful observer might have beheld the portentous clouds that precede the tempest, and have heard the distant sounds that foretel the coming storm.

In the reign of Louis XIV., the tendency to philosophic republicanism first commenced. Even under the very shadow of the court those ideas were faintly promulgated, which a century later shattered the foundations of society, and laid the monarchy level with the dust. Fenelon was in reality the precursor of the Revolution. Intrusted to superintend the education of the youthful Duke of Burgundy, the future heir to the throne, this pious man inculcated the great truths, that the many are not made for the use of the one—that rulers have duties to perform, and charities to observe, as well as the humblest of their subjects—that kings are greater when engaged in diffusing happiness among their people, than when

nursed in selfish luxury, and pampered by courtly sycophancy, they impoverish the many for the splendour and vain-glory of the few. Happy would it have been for France, if he to whom these just admonitions were addressed, had lived to fulfil the precepts and practise the doctrines they embodied. What might not a Prince, educated in the belief of such benevolent principles and instructed by so judicious a teacher, have effected in removing those abuses and correcting those errors, which, through neglect, at last exploded with such fearful violence? When we reflect upon the line of conduct he had determined to pursue, if called to power, it is impossible not to perceive how eventful to France might have been even a few years passed under such a ruler. Often, when engaged in private conversation with Fenelon, he would unfold the plans of government he had formed for the future. He intended to reduce the expenses of the court by disregarding all superfluous ceremonies—to equalise and remodel the whole system of taxation—to improve the methods for the collection of the revenue—to abrogate all unjust and exorbitant privileges enjoyed by the clergy and the noblesse—to reform the judicial administration, and, finally, by reassembling the States General, to convert the monarchy from an absolute into a constitutional government. How full of promise would have been the day that witnessed the elevation of such a prince to power. But it was otherwise ordained. The blossom which should have produced the fruit for the future autumn, to ripen into maturity, fell blighted and withered by the untimely blasts of

spring. At a later period of French History another Prince, the hope of another Dynasty, has been snatched from the world, in the very moment when the fiery energy of youth was needed to aid the maturer counsels of age. Who does not pity the father deprived of such a son? *Animæ dimidium suæ*. How different might the destinies of France have run, had Louis of Burgundy, or Ferdinand of Orleans, been permitted to rule over that kingdom, of which, for a few fleeting years, they were the prospective heirs.

The character of Fenelon is almost perfect. His mind was superior to the times in which his lot was cast. In an age of bigotry, he preached toleration; in an age of war, he was the disciple of peace; in an age of arbitrary government, he was the advocate of constitutional liberty; in an age of courtly servility, he maintained the doctrines of freedom, with a bold and independent voice. Respectful and obedient to the king, he could yet by gentle satire point out the faults, and reprove the errors of that monarch's career. His philanthropy was bounded by no selfish views; his charity was limited by no personal interests. "I love my family," said he, "better than myself; I love my country better than my family; but I love the human race better than my country." As in prosperity he was not elated; so in adversity he was not dejected. With the same fortitude that Socrates received the cup of hemlock, did Fenelon submit to the privations of exile; and when the smiles of royal favour were withdrawn, instead of showing any

querulous, or vindictive feelings of resentment, he displayed that equanimity of mind, which ever distinguishes the true Christian philosopher from the mere worldly hypocrite, who has accepted religion only as a stepping stone to wealth or power. His virtues were unblemished, and free from every stain of vanity or pride. A high sense of justice pervaded and guided every action of his life. He was always more alive to the interests of others than to his own. His manners were serious without being austere, and cheerful without being frivolous. His piety was earnest, his belief sincere, his benevolence was wide, his affection constant. His conduct was marked by its uniform simplicity and generosity, he disdained grandeur, he despised ostentation, he was above seeking popularity or applause. Even his enemies were compelled to confess his worth, and bear witness to the spotless integrity of his character. Such was Fenelon, the purest and the best of men.

"The first of religions for Louis XIV.," says Duclos, "was a belief in the royal authority." Never did a sovereign exact such implicit obedience from subjects; never did subjects pay such homage and reverence to a ruler. If ever a Prince could boast that he was the master of his people, that Prince was Louis XIV. In contemplating the absurd and erroneous ideas entertained by monarchs during the seventeenth century, respecting their right to exercise arbitrary and uncontrolled power, we must ever bear in mind that it was the priesthood of the Roman faith who first instilled such dangerous political maxims into the ear of royalty,

and who caused both kings and subjects to consider the practice of passive obedience, and non-resistance, principles almost as essential to a Christian as a belief in the articles and sacraments of religion. The hierarchy of the Anglican church performed a prominent part in promulgating and supporting these infamous doctrines; the influence they possessed over the minds of the laity, in the capacity of their ecclesiastical authority, enabling them to disguise their pitiful political tenets under the specious garb of religious exhortation. Having ransacked the works of the ancient fathers of the church, and perverted scripture to suit their abominable purpose, they allowed no obstacles to obstruct them in their degrading task; and if they were not actually guilty of inventing this shameful prostitution of human intellect, they at least perpetuated it in an age when neither ignorance nor superstition could be pleaded as a palliation or extenuation of their crime. Even Monmouth, in his dying moments, was disturbed upon the scaffold by officious bishops, who, instead of confining themselves to their sacred duties, attempted to extort from the unhappy man a submission to the pernicious maxims of their political creed. A full convocation, held at Oxford in 1683, condemned many books to be publicly burned, as containing "certain damnable doctrines destructive to the sacred persons of princes, their state, and government;" yet the opinions to be found in these volumes, are, perhaps, the most legitimate and rational principles upon which a free government could be constructed. Nothing could well exceed the abject

servility and despicable baseness the members of this university displayed, in their attempts to gain the ear of royal favour. Locke was expelled from Christ Church for the freedom expressed in his philosophic writings. Others of less reputation shared a similar fate. Many of the works of Baxter and Milton were handed over to the common hangman for destruction. At length, no one was permitted to stand within the precincts of a college, who was not ready to surrender every spark of manly independence, and profess those debasing sentiments of priestly subserviency and priestly sycophancy, which were then deemed essential offerings to obtain the propitiating smiles of royal favour. The depth of episcopalian submission to the will of royalty, could never have been sufficiently comprehended in the present age, had not some of these time-serving and fawning divines left printed documents to preserve the slavish doctrines they imposed and enforced upon the laity. A single extract from a sermon, delivered by Bishop Sanderson, will suffice to show what views the rulers of the church entertained, respecting the duties of subjects towards their sovereign. "It is not justifiable," says he, "to take up arms against a lawful king, for the maintenance of the lives or liberties either of ourselves or others; nor for the defence of religion; nor for the preservation of a church or state; no! nor yet, if that could be imagined possible, for the salvation of a soul; no! not for the redemption of a whole world." Can we feel surprise that kings should have retained such a strong predilection for episcopacy, when they were

countenanced in their follies and justified in their errors by such unhesitating advocates as the prelates of the Church of England then proved. No wonder that Elizabeth should talk about tuning the pulpits, or that James I. should say "*No bishop, no king.*"

The priesthood of the Roman Catholic communion in France, appear to have been equally zealous in maintaining, that monarchy ought to be regarded in the light of a divine, rather than a human institution ; and since the peculiar obedience and subordination that religion requires from its adherents, were circumstances favourable for the propagation of any doctrines, however inconsistent or absurd, the clergy experienced but little difficulty in making twenty millions of people entertain the most extravagant ideas respecting the majesty and omnipotence of kingly power. As the sovereign enjoyed the right of selecting candidates for the superior offices of the ministry, the ecclesiastics were naturally induced to flatter the virtues and extol the good qualities of the reigning prince. They who possessed bishoprics were eager to acquire court favour; they who occupied small benefices, were desirous to be called to perform the higher functions of the ministry, and as royalty was the great source and fountain of all ecclesiastical preferment, every aspirant that entered the church became a courtier and a parasite almost by intuition. The priests represented to their flocks, that nothing could be more sinful in the sight of God, than an enquiry into the origin of government or the authority of sovereigns, and having described kings as the models of all wisdom and goodness,

they declared that as kings were alone wise and good, therefore kings were alone fit to govern. In order to establish these preposterous opinions, about the infallibility of sovereign power upon a secure basis, as well as to stretch all the prerogatives of royalty to the fullest extent, the Jesuits were summoned by the church to assist in the undertaking, and no task of political infamy being too wicked or revolting for the members of this order to engage in, the work of fortifying and defending the citadel of regal absolutism prospered under their direction. Even from the days of Henry IV. downwards, the sovereigns had never been left without a Jesuit confessor at their elbow, the church deeming it essential to keep watch and ward over the royal conscience, lest ecclesiastical influence should decline in the council-chambers of the palace. The order of the Jesuits contained during the seventeenth century, men, perhaps, about as corrupt and debased in principle as can be well imagined. It was said of them by a contemporary, that "*they could duck like divers,*" a remark sufficiently verified by their conduct in the polemical dispute between Fenelon and Bossuet. They at first promised to lend the former their support in the controversy, but having subsequently learned that the king had declared himself in favour of Bossuet's doctrine, they, without scruple about breaking their word, commenced preaching against Fenelon, and discovered forty errors in the "Maxims of the Saints." If the Jesuits succeeded admirably in persuading the people that kings ruled by divine right, they were not less dexterous in con-

vincing monarchs themselves, that royalty, while exercised in accordance with the doctrines of the Catholic church, was an institution placed beyond the reach of human censure or human criticism. "You will be damned!" said Louis XV. one day to Choiseul. The Duke expostulated, and remarked to his Majesty that after so severe a judgment, there was reason to tremble for the king himself; that placed as he was so high above the rest of men, the reproach of scandal and the danger of example rested more seriously on his Majesty than upon his subjects. "Our situations are widely different," rejoined the king; "I am the anointed of the Lord." Such were the profane notions of kingly irresponsibility accepted alike by prince, priest, and people, almost to the very edge of the Revolution.

The chief characteristic of the court of Louis XIV., was the uniform reverence paid to royalty by every one who passed across that brilliant scene. Obsequiousness and flattery were visible in the conduct and demeanour of every actor who played a part in that stately drama. Never was the *rôle* of king-craft so admirably performed; never did royalty appear to such advantage, or find a stage so fitted for its representation. Even the humblest accessories were in perfect keeping with the majesty and solemnity of the scene. Never did an audience appear so earnest in their enthusiasm, or so energetic in their applause, as the French nation, when engaged in witnessing the gorgeous pageantries and the brilliant spectacles of this courtly microcosm. It was in the midst of a

society so utterly lost to every sentiment of freedom, and so abjectly servile in habits of submission to the caprice and will of royalty, that Fenelon had dared to appear as the champion and the advocate of liberty. He did not, it is true, advance far, yet under the veil of allegory, in his charming romance of *Telemachus*, he expressed some truths that were anything but flattering or acceptable to the partisans of kingly absolutism. No prince was ever less inclined to listen to a monitor than Louis XIV., even when the proffered advice related to matters of religion, of fashion, or of taste. Self-willed and egotistical to a degree, he liked to persuade himself that he was the directing power of everything that moved around him ; least of all could he condescend to hear any suggestions that appeared either to bring his principles of government in question, or to cast any censures upon the soundness of his administrative policy. Fenelon, while educating the Duke of Burgundy, had stepped upon this forbidden ground ; he had pointed out with remarkable clearness, almost amounting to foreknowledge, the evils which would inevitably spring up, if the principles of arbitrary government were persevered in, beyond the point at which they ceased to be applicable or beneficial to society.

“ *Isthuc est sapere non quod ante pedes modo est
Videre sed etiam illa, quæ futura sunt
Prospicere.*”

Louis felt the justice of the censor's remark, but he had not the magnanimity to confess his error. After the death of the young Prince, several papers, that

Fenelon had written for his instruction, passed into the hands of the king, who, finding them but so many reproofs upon his own conduct, committed them to the flames. The writings of others shared the same fate if they reflected the least censure upon the government. Even Racine, favourite as he was, excited the king's displeasure by a pamphlet upon the condition of the nation. "Does he think," said Louis, "that he knows everything because he writes good verses? Does he wish to be a minister of state because he is a great poet?" To have written *Telemachus* under a ruler who treated every expression of freedom, and every liberal sentiment with such harshness and severity, is the great merit of Fenelon. Simple as may be the truths disguised under the legends of the fable, puerile as may now appear the maxims uttered by the heroes of the tale, the work was, in that day, a noble protest against the wrongs which flow from arbitrary power, an eloquent remonstrance against the vices and ostentations of a prodigal and licentious court. When we bear in mind how prostrate and servile was the conduct of the church, whenever they approached within the precincts of the court; when we observe how cautious and reserved was every expression of public opinion; when we consider what disgrace the publication of such a work must inevitably bring upon its author in the loss of royal favour, we are enabled to form a just estimate of the integrity of principle displayed by Fenelon in giving his *Telemachus* to the world. At last, in the hour of adversity, Louis acknowledged the virtues of Fenelon, and dis-

covered, when too late, the value of his counsels. Almost deprived of his posterity, baffled and humiliated by his enemies, his kingdom hanging in the scale, and himself sinking to the grave, Louis sent to consult the exiled prelate, and recall him to court; but this act of reparation had been too long procrastinated, for before Fenelon could return, the hand of death had removed the monarch for ever from all the pomps and vanities of power.

Louis XIV. unhappily received but a mean and contracted education. Although possessed of strong natural parts, which were quickened into genius by the advantages and opportunities of position, yet he could never wholly shake off those illiberal prejudices that always strike their roots so deeply into ignorant and neglected minds. Surrounded by crowds of sycophants and flatterers, even from his youth, and constantly worshipped with that submissive homage, which seems to be the natural atmosphere of courts, self-esteem became unfortunately too prominent a feature in his character as he grew up to years of manhood and discretion. No defect was more palpable in his conduct, than the exaggerated estimate he had formed of his ability to govern and direct a kingdom. He could bear no contradiction upon state affairs. He could listen to no advice, unless so artfully conveyed that he did not perceive it had been given. He liked to command, to dictate, to ordain. He required to be obeyed. When he chose the sun as his device, he but expressed aloud ideas which were constantly floating through his mind.

“France,” said he, “is the greatest kingdom in the world; I govern France, therefore I govern the world.” This habit of self-reliance, which Louis had acquired from being called to inherit, and in some measure to exercise power at a very early period of life, was productive of many advantages as well as many evils. The former were reaped by the age in which he lived, the latter were felt by the age that succeeded him. In truth, he was one of those rulers who achieve signal service for a contemporary generation, at the expense of many future generations; and although his reign, when contrasted with the calamitous reverses of succeeding times, will ever remain upon the page of history as a splendid epoch of courtly grandeur and national prosperity, yet, if we mistake not, many of these reverses may be distinctly traced to errors he committed in that Golden Age, over which it was his proud and peculiar boast to have so long presided. If there exist one circumstance more than another to which the striking superiority of England over France in point of political civilization may be safely attributed, it is that freedom of opinion the English people have uniformly exercised in the conduct of their public affairs. Despotically as Elizabeth sometimes used the prerogatives of royalty, it cannot be questioned but that her general policy was shaped pretty much in accordance with the wishes of her subjects. She possessed tact. She knew how to handle arbitrary power. She could tell exactly how far to advance and when to retreat. A keen discrimination enabled her to estimate the weight and bearing of public opinion. A

wholesome prudence informed her how to turn such observation to advantage. Charles I., on the contrary, had but little judgment, and still less discretion. He believed the maintenance of absolute power to be a religious duty. He resorted to extreme measures of coercion, for the purpose of repressing all popular interference whatever with his government. He attempted to rule without parliaments. For eleven years the voice of the nation was unheard in its proper tribunal. Such rash and misguided projects however failed. The people, indignant at the wrongs they suffered, defied his authority. He tried to silence public opinion, but the design miscarried. The question of ship-money was canvassed and discussed in every tavern throughout his kingdom. The decision of the judges in the court of Exchequer, was criticised by the inhabitants of every town and village. Even the common people in the market-place and the country fair became familiar with the name of Hampden. "That judgment," says Clarendon, "proved of more advantage and credit to the gentleman condemned, than to the king's service." The heat of factious controversy penetrated even the church. Intemperate divines and wild fanatics ascended the pulpit, to inflame the public mind and urge their congregations, by vehement and crack-brained discourses, into the ranks of the Roundhead or the Cavalier. Never were the people more excited, or their passions more hotly stirred. Liberty was obtained, but it was purchased at a mighty sacrifice. The generation that submitted to pass through this fiery ordeal of rebellion, unques-

tionably suffered many vicissitudes and endured many perils, but they prepared the way for establishing freedom of opinion upon a secure basis, and from the days of that immortal assembly, the Long Parliament, Englishmen have never been without a channel through which they could express their grievances and exercise a legitimate influence upon the rulers of the state. The French nation can hardly be censured for not attempting to strike a death-blow at the arbitrary government of Louis XIV., when they had witnessed the fearful anarchy that followed the sudden emancipation of the English people from the fetters of an absolute monarchy; but it may be well questioned, whether that sovereign would not have acted a wise part, in encouraging his subjects to express their views upon his policy, and in permitting some deliberative council which embodied public opinion to support his authority, by such an important guarantee as the concurrent sanction of a national assembly. To such concessions Louis XIV. ever continued inexorably opposed. Even when the English Government demanded the consent of the States General of France, before the Treaty of Utrecht was signed, he resolutely refused to convoke that ancient assembly. He never would resign power, or yield up any portion of his authority. "*L'etat c'est moi*," remained his motto to his last. Thus the public mind in France was denied all opportunities of either developing itself in the shape of free political institutions, or of being educated to express moderate and temperate opinions through the channels of a free press. This

despotic restraint upon the cultivation of political philosophy not only debarred the human intellect from engaging in the study of one of its noblest and most exalted pursuits, but engendered in the lapse of time many evils. Society, placed under the constant menace of a *lettre de cachet*, found itself deprived of all freedom of thought, and the only resort to which even the boldest spirits dared have recourse for the discussion of state affairs, were the secret memoir and the hidden record prepared for future, if not posthumous publication.

The seventeenth century is exceedingly rich in this valuable and instructive department of historical literature, far more so, indeed, than, we fear, the nineteenth will prove to future times, because the inducements which then led to this peculiar fashion are scarcely now in existence. While Evelyn and Pepys were recording in their quaint and candid diaries the follies and the crimes, the habits and the manners of the English Court, French History found labourers equally zealous in watching the movements and portraying the every-day life of the Grand Monarque and his courtiers at Versailles. As we turn over the caustic reflections of the cynical St. Simon, the unaffected chronicles of the good-natured Dangeau, and the inimitable letters of that liveliest of all lively women, Madame de Sevigné, we find ourselves in imagination transported to the gay and splendid scene which these courtly personages were daily engaged in observing and depicting. We see the crowd of courtiers assembling in the ante-chamber to await the

morning levee—the ecclesiastics hastening to perform their ceremonious duties in the palace—the couriers arriving breathless with dispatches—the ministers, in earnest council, expecting the arrival of the king. A sudden bustle is observed, and we see Louis take his seat in the Cabinet, with that majestic dignity, and that stately solemnity, he could so well assume. The business of the day commences. The vacant appointments are mentioned—the nominations are proposed—the successful candidates are selected. This town is to be taken—that citadel is to be attacked. A division of the army is to move towards the frontier. An important fortress has been lost. Such and such a commander is to be recalled. Barillon receives the last instructions how to play his game at the English Court. Perrault is admitted, to show a design for the new wing projected at Marli. The scene changes, and we find the company strolling amidst the orange trees upon the terrace. It is one of those beautiful days that usher in the month of May—not a cloud is to be seen in the sky—there is scarcely a sufficient breath of air moving to diffuse the perfume of the flowers—the fountains play languidly, and the birds are crowding to the edge of the basin to catch the scattered spray. The large clock in the centre of the Palace strikes one—the band has already begun—the buzz of conversation is at its height. A crowd of ladies gather round Louvois, to learn the result of the last bulletin from the camp, and hear him read a list of the new promotions. The Queen is seated in her sedan. The King, uncovered by her side, stands con-

versing with Madame de Montespan, and says a pleasant word to every one that passes by. Moliere has just hit upon another sarcasm, to be worked into the comedy of the evening. Boileau and Racine are eagerly debating about their projected academy for the illustration of the medals. Cavoie is wondering whether he shall contrive to attract the observation of the king. Bossuet has strolled into a solitary avenue, to meditate over his next discourse. Who is that lady walking with the children of Madame de Montespan in the little garden beneath the terrace? He must be a bold prophet that would say, "she will one day be Queen of France." Dinner is announced, and gradually the magnificent apartment in the southern wing of the palace is filled. The crowd is great, yet there does not appear to be any crowd. The light repast concluded, a table of *reversi* begins. Dangeau keeps the bank, taking Madame de Sevigne for his partner. Madame de Montespan deals—the king is advising her how to play. Even the splenetic St. Simon smiles, and admires the flame-coloured ribbon in the *taille de nymphe* of Mademoiselle Sophie de Lowenstein. Thousands of crowns change hands; the losers begin to turn a watchful eye towards the clock. The hour of five has arrived. The royal party embark in the gondolas to enjoy the coolness of evening upon the lake. It is eight; the play has already commenced. Moliere and his company surpass themselves in attempting to do justice to the *Tartuffe*. The farce follows; the king laughs till he forgets the loss of the fortress mentioned in the morning's dispatch. He

retires to supper. Boileau, Racine, Cavoie, and Molière, are alone admitted. Louis, for a moment, condescends to be a wit among wits, and participate in the pleasures of the *noctes cœnæque Deum*. It is midnight; the guests have withdrawn. The moon has risen high in the heavens, and casts her beams upon the stately pile, lighting up every window with the reflected lustre of her beauty; the stars glitter upon the lake, but the fountains have ceased to play, and the voice of flattery is no longer to be heard. Night has once more resumed her silent reign.

To contemplation's sober eye
 Such is the race of man,
 And they that creep and they that fly,
 But end where they began.
 Alike, the busy and the gay
 But flutter through life's little day.

In estimating the character of the court of Louis XIV., these Memoirs and Journals form a most essential portion of the evidence; but, before they are applied to such a purpose, it is necessary to keep in view the prejudices which existed in the minds of the writers, as well as to receive their statements with more than ordinary caution. On the other hand, it is equally incumbent upon us to examine attentively the whole of the documents, and not permit ourselves to arrive at hasty conclusions by glancing over a few casual extracts. Neither must the conduct of princes or courtiers who lived in the seventeenth century, be judged by the standard of morality which is applicable to the same class in the nineteenth, since two

hundred years of increasing civilization have naturally rendered the latter amenable to a more rigid and austere tribunal. By selecting particular remarks, and by unfairly misinterpreting, or maliciously garbling certain passages to be found in the memoirs, it would be an easy task to represent the court of Louis XIV. as a scene of scandalous infamy, unbounded profligacy, and shameless depravity. We desire rather to hold a more impartial course, and to make an honest deduction after patiently investigating all the circumstances which may be advanced by the champions of arbitrary power on the one side, or by the advocates of republican principles on the other. The history of the court may be divided into two epochs—the first, extending to the death of the Queen ; the second, comprising that period in which Madame de Maintenon exercised a predominant influence in the palace. The former is characterised by many levities, much profligacy, and a constant violation of the most important moral duties. The latter displays many virtues and a tone of high religious feeling, although sometimes darkened by those uncharitable persecutions and rank hypocrisies which are too frequently the attendants of an ascetic piety. The introduction of Madame de la Vallière and Madame de Montespan to court, and the marked attention which the King paid to these ladies in the presence of the Queen, were manifestly a most flagrant breach of decorum, as well as an offence against the first laws of morality and religion. Yet we conceive many extenuating circumstances may be advanced on behalf of Louis. The very manner in which the matri-

monial alliances of royalty are formed almost precludes the possibility of any sincere affections springing up between the parties concerned. Marriage, under such circumstances, is degraded into a species of political barter, and the lives of princes are rendered miserable to gain a province, or wrest a treaty that could not be otherwise obtained. The evils arising from these ill-assorted alliances, too often become palpable in the indelicate *liaisons* which disgrace the history of almost every European court, and which, by their high example, give a general license to society to indulge in a similar relaxation of moral discipline, and to break with impunity one of the most sacred articles of social law. So frequently, indeed, do royal marriages terminate in this kind of domestic unhappiness, that the wedlock of kings is generally little else than a warfare upon earth. Occasional exceptions may be observed, such as the union of Charles I. with Henrietta Maria, where the affections appear to have been reciprocally spontaneous and genuine, and in which national interests were only permitted to assume a secondary consideration. Such instances are, however, exceedingly rare, since by far the larger proportion of these royal alliances are framed upon principles of national policy, or dynastic ambition. The hymeneal fortunes of Louis XIV. differed but little from that of other kings. Maria Mancini, the niece of Mazarin, had long been the object of his affections, but Anne of Austria, much as she was attached to the Cardinal, could never condescend to sanction the elevation of a subject to such a commanding eminence as this. The

young lady accordingly received an intimation to retire from court, and the king obtained the Infanta of Spain as a bride, in order that France might acquire a powerful frontier by the Treaty of the Pyrenees. Thus, to prevent the subtle and politic diplomacy of his mother from being embarrassed, Louis consented to wed a Queen whom he respected, but never loved. His conduct towards her appears to have been upon all occasions gentle and respectful, and even when he offended by his gallantries, his taste was so correct that her self-esteem could scarcely feel the wound he inflicted. Indeed, upon comparing his laxity of moral principle with that barefaced libertinism which then prevailed in the English court, we shall find his errors very much palliated, if not wholly to be excused. Nothing can well exceed the complete dissolution of manners, and the total absence of all moral discipline which followed the Restoration in England. The courtiers who had long smarted under the lash of the Puritan, and been compelled to turn up the whites of their eyes in seeking the Lord, as well as to practice many other gross hypocrisies, suddenly feeling the restraint of fanatic authority removed, rushed into the most licentious and scandalous excesses. Charles, thoroughly imbued with epicurean principles, not only encouraged, but emulated them to break down the barriers of common decency and social decorum. He kept half a dozen mistresses at Whitehall, and introduced them at court with as much nonchalance as if they had been so many priestesses from the temple of Vesta. His palace was a perfect seraglio. In

her boisterous moments, one of these ladies stamped, swore, and uttered oaths that could now be hardly heard in the lowest purlieus of the town. Charles never went to Newmarket without two or three of these companions, so that it became a common practice of the country people to flock towards the highway to see the three Queens pass by with the king in his coach. This licentious conduct was at first confined to the mere precincts of the court, but finding many willing imitators, the pernicious example was soon copied and diffused through every class of society. Even the literature of the age became deeply infected with the destructive poison. Poems, full of blasphemy and irreligion, were read with eagerness and avidity. The churches were generally empty. The theatres were always full. The stage was converted into a perfect pesthouse of immorality and vice. Gentlemen were hardly considered gallant until they had distinguished themselves by some illicit amour. The seduction of virtuous women was regarded in the light of a triumph. Ladies of quality lived in open adultery. A countess, dressed as a page, held the horse of her paramour while he was engaged in a duel with her husband. At length a bill was proposed in the House of Lords, to legalise a second marriage after divorce, lest polygamy should become general. The habits of the higher orders of society were ferocious and rude, their manners vulgar and coarse. Members of Parliament, when quarrelling in committee, did not think it indecorous to resort to pugilism. The speaker of the House of Commons was waylaid by a gang of

courtiers, who knocked him down and slit up his nose with a penknife. The Duke of Ormond was dragged out of his coach in the public street, and tied across a horse by some desperate bullies, who were known to be in the pay of the Duke of Buckingham. It was rare to meet with a man of rank who was not addicted to habitual intemperance. Even ladies were presented at court in a state of disgusting intoxication. Pepys, in his secret confessional, admits that he frequently went to bed "foxed with punch." So late as the year 1700, the Italian Gemelli, told all Europe that he could find nothing among Englishmen but their writings to distinguish them from a people of barbarians.

Surely it would be difficult to discover anything in the court of Louis XIV. which could, for an instant, be compared to this moral anarchy. Many instances of conjugal infidelity might, unquestionably, be cited against the higher orders of French society at this period, but the offenders, certainly, never published their indiscretions, or gloried in their crimes. Admitting, however, that morality was at a low ebb in the French court, no one can deny but that Louis effected a marked improvement in the habits and manners of those who came within the circle of his influence. His delicate taste, his refined conversation, his graceful carriage, his elegant behaviour, were imitated and adopted by all who hoped to acquire his favour, or sought to merit his esteem. Instructed by his demeanour, and emulated by his example, the general tone of society improved. Civility attended every action, and gave grace to every movement. A polite and

gentle courtesy softened the asperity of pride, without subtracting from the dignity of character. It was no longer considered becoming to be haughty and rude, or decorous to be insolent and proud. This mildness of behaviour, though at first confined to the chambers of the palace, was soon copied by the multitude. The people became more civilized and polished. Even rival nations condescended to participate in the change, for it is especially to the reign of Louis XIV. that we must turn to seek the origin of that elegant propriety of taste, which, by combining a charming urbanity of manner with refined intellectual thought, has since given to European civilization its richest and most graceful ornament. The soil of France was in some measure favourable to the developement of this courtly elegance, which the people of other countries have, for the most part, vainly sought to imitate. The ancient chivalry of feudalism had there left behind something of that noble spirit which shone so brightly in the heroic ages of its youth. France still counted among her nobility the children of the first crusaders; and of such a glorious ancestry the descendants had not yet proved themselves altogether unworthy. To contend against the legions of Marlborough and Eugene, she could send forth soldiers as renowned in valour as those mail-clad warriors who wrestled with the Saracen of old, and whose bones had been left to whiten into dust beneath the walls of Antioch. She still possessed men worthy to have sprung from the Dukes of Normandy, the Counts of Toulouse, and the Barons of Poitou. She had still a right to be proud

of her nobility. They committed many faults, perhaps crimes, but they often displayed a noble heroism, and practised many virtues. Restrained by the conscience of high and lofty feelings, as well as by those inborn sentiments of honour, ever to be found in ardent and chivalrous dispositions, they would have scorned to shock society by the unblushing effrontery of indecent profligacy, or vulgar debauchery. Even when indulging in licentious pleasures, they at least preserved the outward garb of modesty; and so fair was the disguise, that vice parted with half its deformity, and sensuality itself could hardly be distinguished from the nobler and purer instincts of virtuous passion. That several very criminal and despicable characters might be found among the upper ranks of society in France, cannot be denied. Wicked men exist everywhere; they are the growth of every soil. There has never yet been even one perfect human being. How preposterous then is it for us to expect whole classes of society to be perfect and without stain. Shall we defame the whole order of nobility, because such an atrocious villain as Brinvilliers polluted its good name, by the scandalous crimes he committed; or because a Marquis de Pomenars was convicted and punished for a forgery? Is the presence of one black sheep sufficient to contaminate the remainder of the flock? Surely such an universal condemnation would be anything but even-handed justice. We are by no means blind to the follies and indiscretions of the privileged orders, but let us not accuse them of guilt merely upon the insufficient evidence of presumptuous suspicion or unreasoning prejudice.

The extravagant expenditure sanctioned and encouraged by Louis XIV. in his court could scarcely be considered justifiable, had the condition of the national exchequer been ever so flourishing; but such an indiscriminate waste of public money became criminal indeed when extorted from an industrious, yet impoverished people. The privileged classes, as we have already observed, contributed but a scanty fraction towards the maintenance of the state revenue, yet they drew largely upon its resources by receiving prodigious salaries for services that were often nominal or strikingly insignificant. A thoughtless prodigality distinguished all the proceedings of the court. If a fête, or a triumph were to be celebrated, the preparations were made upon a most profuse and lavish scale. On the occasion of a marriage in the royal family, the portions and presents were costly and superb in the extreme; so abundant, indeed, were the heaps of treasure ever ready for these bridal festivities, that an observer might have imagined the king possessed the cap of Fortunatus, and had only to wish for whatever he required. If a palace wanted enlarging, it was nearly doubled in extent before the architect had finished his commission. To such an extent did Louis indulge in this mania for building, that it became necessary to calculate the roofs of his palaces by acres instead of yards. Capricious and fanciful to a degree, he would often command the workmen to pull down edifices that had only just been erected—the mere shape of the windows being sometimes sufficient to condemn the whole design. Not satisfied with com-

manding in the realms of art, he aspired to bend the works of nature to his sway. Thus, the river Eure, flowing past the vicinity of Versailles, Louis devised a plan to change the entire course of the stream, by forming a new channel to conduct its waters for the supply of his fountains and reservoirs in the grounds of that delightful chateau. Imitating the Roman plan of employing the military force upon public works, forty thousand soldiers were constantly engaged during four years, in attempting to prosecute this gigantic enterprise; but a destructive malaria, carrying off the troops by thousands, the impracticability of the design became so apparent, that orders were issued for its final abandonment. At length the accounts for the gratification of these expensive tastes appeared such formidable censures upon his administrative discretion, that the king preferred burning all his papers under the grate at Marli, instead of presenting them to the Parliament for public inspection. Large stipends were also required for the royal mistresses, as well as many sinecure employments to satisfy their dependents. Nothing being more common than the payment of considerable sums of money to these ladies from the public treasury, for purposes which were anything but conducive to the national welfare.

These wasteful extravagancies on the part of the court produced a corresponding prodigality in the conduct of the nobles. The courtiers vied with each other to excel in the sumptuous splendour of their style, and the magnificence of their establishments.

One employed five hundred servants; another kept three hundred saddle-horses. A prince of the blood was not satisfied without seven palaces. If a nobleman had the honour to entertain the court, so prodigious were the preparations that he remained impoverished for life. Gambling, a fashionable vice of the day, was carried to a frightful excess. Madame de Sevigné, in one of her letters, thus cautions her daughter against practising this folly : “ They play extravagantly high at Versailles ; five or six hundred pistoles of a morning are nothing to lose. I beseech you to banish this game from amongst you.” The ladies who gambled at court, conscience-stricken by their success, agreed to pronounce, upon separating, a formula, by which they reciprocally made each other a present of any gains, that might have been unfairly acquired. Evelyn, with his characteristic good sense, remarks the debasement of the English court, in the practice of this degrading vice : “ I can never forget,” says he, “ the inexpressible luxury and prophaneness, gaming, and all dissoluteness, and, as it were, total forgetfulness of God, (it being Sunday evening) which this day se’nnight I was witness of ; the King sitting with his mistresses, Portsmouth, Cleveland, and Mazarine ; a French boy singing love songs in that glorious gallery ; whilst about 20 of the greates courtiers, and other dissolute persons, were at basset round a large table, a bank of at least 2000 in gold before them, upon which two gentlemen who were with me made reflexions with astonishment. Six days after was all in the dust.”

It is a melancholy fact, that while the court and the

privileged orders in France were luxuriating amidst this imprudent prodigality, the social condition of the industrious classes became miserable in the extreme. Subjected to an extortionate system of rigorous taxation, or pressed into the military service of the state by a tyrannical conscription, the unhappy people found themselves reduced to the sad alternative of passing their lives in wretched servitude, or unavailing toil. If by well-directed labour and a laudable spirit of parsimony they succeeded in acquiring a little property, the proceeds of their industry but served as a booty, to be divided between the government and its rapacious agents, the collectors of the revenue. In addition to these drawbacks, the cultivator of the soil found agricultural enterprise heavily embarrassed by the weight of local taxation. To repair the roads, to pay the feudal fines, to assist in the transmission of the army, and many other vexatious imposts, formed, when combined, obstacles that rendered a profitable tillage of the land almost impossible. Even when the crops were ripened for harvest, the game of the seigneurial proprietor committed the most destructive ravages; and, owing to the extreme strictness of the statute, which protected these dangerous visitors, no measures could be taken to diminish their numbers. Nor was the condition of the manufacturer and the artisan less wretched, since under the shape of licenses and privileges they were equally compelled to surrender the produce of their labour to the service of the state. To clamour against the demands of the farmers general, or to refuse the

payment of an odious tax, was useless, if not impossible—the great mass of the population being ignorant and wholly incapable of raising those hostile combinations, which have such peculiar weight in the council-chambers of financiers. Moreover, the devoted loyalty of the army and the energy of its leaders rendered all ideas of popular opposition to exorbitant taxation utterly hopeless, so that nothing remained for the unfortunate people but to bear quietly whatever burdens their oppressive rulers thought proper to impose. “*Aucune pitié pour le contribuable n’arrêtait jamais le roi ni son ministre ; les impôts étaient excessifs et la rigueur avec laquelle on les percevait réduisait souvent le paysan au désespoir.*” Of the severe measures to which the government resorted, in enforcing the payment of these fiscal impositions, frequent mention may be found in the letters of Madame de Sevigné. Thus she writes in 1675 : “A poor lace maker was taxed ten crowns for a trade license ; the collectors pressed for payment ; he asked time ; they refused, and sold his goods ; the poor wretch grew furious, and cut the throats of three of his children ; he is to be hanged to-morrow ; he regrets not having been able to kill his wife and the other child.” Again, she writes : “Will you have the news from Rennes ? a tax of 100,000 crowns is laid upon the citizens ; if they do not pay it within twenty-four hours it is to be doubled, and raised by military execution. There are 5000 soldiers at Rennes ; they have taken five-and-twenty men at hazard, whom they are about to hang as an example. The inhabitants of a whole street have been

turned out of their houses, and banished, with express orders that no one shall entertain or shelter them under pain of death; so that you might see the poor wretches wandering about the outskirts of the town, without a morsel to eat or a bed to lie down upon." In another place she says, "Our poor lower Bretons flock together forty or fifty at a time in a field, and when they see the soldiers they fall upon their knees and say *mea culpa*. They still hang them. The poor fellows ask for nothing but something to drink, a pinch of snuff, and to be dispatched, and *de Caron pas un mot*." Sir William Temple, in one of his essays written at this period, makes the following very just reflection: "The common people of France are as little considerable in the government as the children; so that the nobles and the soldiers may in a manner be esteemed the nation." Even in their seditious revolts, the people never forgot their attachment to the person of their king; thus, in an *emeute* at Bourdeaux, occasioned by the levy of an oppressive duty upon stamps, the citizens cried out "Vive le roi sans impots!" Surely such a loyal population deserved a better fate than to be murdered in their own houses, and goaded into submission by the presence of twelve thousand soldiers, commanded to act under a proclamation of martial law.

"This makes bold mouths,
Tongues spit their duties out; and cold hearts freeze
Allegiance in them; their curses now
Live where their prayers did; and it's come to pass
This tractable obedience is a slave
To each incensed will."

Towards the conclusion of his reign, Louis XIV. discovered, when too late, the impoverished condition to which his subjects were reduced by the reprehensible policy he had pursued in the government of his kingdom. The expatriation of the industrious Huguenots, to satisfy the religious bigotry of the priests, the enormous expenditure incurred by so many years spent in aggressive war, to flatter the chivalric ambition of the noblesse, the innumerable pensions required to support those needy dependents that always infest the avenues of an ostentatious court, and, lastly, the immense sums of treasure lavished away upon frivolous pageants, to gratify the inordinate vanity and egotism of royal pride, demanded an amount of taxation which the industry and property of the kingdom became wholly inadequate to supply. Tax after tax was imposed. The *taille*, the *gabelle*, the *aides*, the *capitation*, and the *dixieme*, were doubled and pushed to their full extent. The deficiency remained prodigious. The ingenuity of the financiers appeared exhausted. In this dilemma, Louis finding he could no longer even by the aid of military force succeed in raising subsidies from his destitute subjects, proceeded to the desperate resort of issuing incontrovertible paper money, and debasing the coinage, two measures which, if regarded in their proper light, are tantamount to a disguised confiscation of private property, and a partial bankruptcy of the state. Owing to these discreditable artifices, all confidence in monetary transactions was shaken. The merchants, no longer able to calculate their means so as to render

commercial speculation reasonably safe, ceased to engage in trade. Hence, one difficulty engendered another, until the very sources which under an honest government afford such prolific revenues to the state, were completely broken and destroyed. Mr. Locke, who travelled through France in this reign, was so struck with the decayed condition of its agriculture and trade, that he contemplated a speedy decrease of population would ensue. The produce of the land he found reduced, upon an average of years, to nearly one-half its former amount, and of this he calculated that at least a third passed directly into the hands of the government. The manufacturers also paid half their profits into the state treasury, a circumstance which prejudiced and discouraged the advance of commerce. He remarked that the diet of the peasantry appeared to be chiefly confined to rye bread and water, meat being a luxury wholly beyond their reach. Thus, the condition of the common people had become very different from that which Henry IV. contemplated, when he expressed to Sully the benevolent wish, that he should live to see every peasant in his dominions with "a chicken in the pot." Indeed, the whole reign of Louis XIV. was spent in exalting the grandeur and prosperity of the court, by the ruin and abasement of the people; and although the splendid epoch with which he aspired to connect his name, in order to command the reverence and deserve the eulogy of posterity, comes down to us with much of the brilliancy he desired, yet we must not the less bear in mind the irreparable sacrifice by which the costly trappings and

superb caparisons of his delusive magnificence were furnished and sustained.

If, however, the bourgeoisie and the peasantry were subjected to bear the burden of these discreditable expedients for the maintenance of the state revenues, the privileged classes of society were not entirely exempt from feeling the remorseless hand of fiscal oppression. Let us explain in what manner the latter were made to pass under the fatal yoke. Nobility in France consisted of two distinct orders—the ancient or territorial noblesse, and the modern or the noblesse de cour. The origin of the former was coeval with that of royalty itself, and sprang from the very confines of antiquity. Identified with all the glorious and stirring adventures of feudalism, and tracing their proud genealogies through the obscurest pages of mediæval history, the provincial nobles, or haute noblesse as they were styled, retained a feeling of haughty superiority even after their political influence had passed away. They stood as it were upon a lofty and unapproachable eminence. It was alike beyond the power of kings to illustrate their titles or debase them. It was equally impossible for royalty to create any dignity which could vie with the grandeur and priority of their ancient houses. Their ancestors had been the paladins of Charlemagne, and the compeers of Hugh Capet. The Rohans, the Montmorencies, and the Lorraines, were families that could trace their descent from the remotest annals of historical record. Sovereigns themselves might regard with envy names so honourable and illustrious in their origin. Confident

in the immemorial antiquity of their privileges, and proud of their distinguished birth, the old noblesse looked down with disdain upon the parvenus that crowded the salons of royalty, to receive its insignificant dignities and to purchase its unsubstantial honours. They felt that nothing could raise the ennobled courtier to a level with the indisputable pre-eminence and the just pretensions of their ancient order—a sentiment which, though open to censure under ordinary circumstances, demands in this instance some respect, when we consider the character and conduct of those who were the objects of contempt. Louis XIV., during the early part of his reign, remained content with summoning the members of the old historic families to perform the ceremonial duties of the palace, and add by the undoubted lustre of their rank to the splendour of his court, but when the monarchy appeared to be fast sinking under the weight of financial embarrassment consequent upon his ambitious wars, he descended to the humiliating policy of bartering the titles of nobility in exchange for a pecuniary consideration. Instead of compelling the privileged classes to contribute an equitable proportion of taxation to the state, by causing them to relinquish the unjust immunities they retained, he degraded the whole order of nobility, by converting the dispensation of honours into a venal and most disgraceful traffic. During one year alone, he conferred no less than five hundred titles upon his courtiers, without distinguished talent being in scarcely a single instance a reason for their elevation.

Even the old nobility were required to verify their titles, by paying certain fines to the crown for an acknowledgment of the justness of their claims, and in many instances where they were unable to furnish the stipulated demand, their rank was declared forfeited by default. Pernicious as might be the system of maintaining an exclusive order of nobility, without infusing fresh blood into its ranks, by the judicious creation of new dignities as rewards for men who had performed especial services or filled the most important offices of the state, yet even such a course would have been highly preferable to the impolitic plan of depreciating the value of nobility, and bringing its very name into contempt, by making it a subject of sordid speculation and dishonourable commerce. Amid such an infinity of titled personages as the sale of honours rapidly produced, the ancient families were in danger of losing a portion of that consideration and esteem which society had hitherto willingly accorded them; the herald and the antiquarian might be able to discern the difference between the gentler and the baser blood, but in the eyes of the nation at large such nice distinctions could no longer be preserved, and the peer who boasted ten generations of nobility, became at length insensibly blended and confused with men of ignoble origin and most unworthy character. The display of personal merit or intellectual superiority, ceased to be the distinguishing qualification which opened the avenues of patrician rank to the humbler classes of society; and in proportion as the highest honours of the state came to be

easily acquired by individuals whose only claim to such distinctions lay in the possession of enormous wealth, did the nobler sentiments of emulation and ambition fade from the national heart and become extinct. The crown, it is true, derived some transient relief from the treasures which this constant traffic of its honours and rewards supplied, yet its revenues became prospectively diminished by the admission of such numbers to the privileged ranks. So long as the order of nobility had been confined to two or three hundred families, the unjust immunities from taxation enjoyed by its members were comparatively scarcely observable; but when thousands intrenched themselves behind this formidable bulwark of protection, public opinion soon became directed to their position. "A nation," says Madame de Stael, "will submit voluntarily to the pre-eminence of historic families, but when newly-acquired wealth and station aspires to the privileges and superiority of the Montmorencies, all classes revolt at it." Nothing could be more unhappy in its results than the degradation of nobility, which ensued upon this indiscriminate admission of so many upstart pretenders to the highest ranks of privilege. The existence of the aristocracy thus became prejudicial to the interests of the state, and a division was created among its members that exercised a most injurious influence in preventing the old hereditary noblesse from relaxing their high pretensions and resigning that unjust monopoly of honour which was no longer compatible with the increasing intelligence and improving civilization of the people. The ancient

nobility, resenting the injury inflicted upon their order by this elevation of the *nouveaux anoblis* to an equality of rank, endeavoured to defend themselves by retiring within the circle of haughty exclusiveness and unbending pride, while their presumptuous rivals, indulging in every kind of licentiousness and vice, attempted to varnish over the defects of an ignoble origin, by the practice of thoughtless profligacy and unbounded extravagance. But, perhaps, the greatest evil arising from this ill-advised disorganisation of the privileged orders, was the despotic power which the crown was thus enabled to assume. No longer restrained by the antagonism of an independent nobility, the sovereigns and their ministers felt the royal authority to be more confirmed and strengthened than ever. They hesitated not to take advantage of their position, and finding the servile courtiers by whom they were surrounded willing instruments in their hands, they advanced quietly to convert the government into a complete despotism. Nobility, as an institution, rapidly degenerated. The people having ceased to respect it, began to despise it. Instead of being an ornament and an advantage to the state, it became a burden and an incumbrance. The nobles were no longer worthy of their high position—their characters were depraved by vice and debased by corruption. The contagion of immorality infected and demoralised all ranks; even the ancient families could not withstand its influence, or resist its temptations. At length, under the licentious atmosphere of the Regency, the whole of the privileged classes became mingled and confounded by

sinking into one common vortex of dissipation and guilt. Atheism was openly and unhesitatingly avowed, the laws of morality were disregarded, all social decorum was at an end, and that fearful catalogue of crime commenced, which, in a future generation, was to be atoned for amidst the gloomy horrors of the prison, or expiated upon the more terrible ordeal of the scaffold and the guillotine.

The indiscretions and levities, if they deserve no harsher term, that disgraced the conduct of Louis XIV. and his court during the life of the Queen, have been already noticed; it remains for us to make a few comments upon the concluding and more decorous portion of his reign. One cannot travel far amidst the fields of historical research, without frequently observing the remarkable influence that individuals, seemingly the most obscure, are sometimes destined to exert upon the age in which their lot is cast. At one period of their lives these favourites of fortune seem hopelessly condemned to some menial toil or insignificant task, while at another we see them elevated to those exalted positions which are usually accessible only to the ripest genius, and most untiring ambition. The career of Madame de Maintenon affords a striking illustration of this uncertainty and capriciousness with which fortune sometimes chooses to dispense her choicest gifts. Born in obscurity, and nurtured amidst penury and want, Françoise d'Aubigne became, at the age of twenty-four, the wife of Scarron the poet, who even at the period of his marriage was sinking beneath the infirmities of pain

and disease. Although to the rebukes of her acquaintance who had remonstrated with her upon this strange alliance, she replied, "I preferred him to a convent," yet it cannot be doubted but that the tastes and dispositions of the married pair were far from being ill-assorted or uncongenial. Over the society frequenting the house of the good-natured wit, Françoise soon acquired that commanding influence which, throughout life, appears to have been her chief characteristic; and in her conduct might be already observed that austere dignity which was subsequently destined to display itself upon a wider and more exalted sphere. After the death of the poet, she was again doomed to experience the reverse of poverty, and though only five-and-twenty, and in the full splendour of her beauty, felt herself condemned to return to the solitary seclusion of her former years. Scarron had left neither property nor any provision for the support of his widow, so that her sole dependence became reduced to the results of her own exertions, and a small pension which she obtained from Anne of Austria. She now retired to a humble lodging in the Rue des Tournelles, where she devoted herself to the study of literature, and the solace of religion. At this period she is said to have rejected the solicitations of Barillon the ambassador, but we can hardly believe that his advances were honourable. There appeared no longer any prospect that she would be able to gratify her ambition of "making a name," which she declared in after life was then her passion. St. Simon remarks, that in her adversity she was received into the

houses of the wealthy and the great; but from his description, the admission was evidently upon those terms of inequality, which render a reception little better than a degradation. Brighter days at length dawned. Mademoiselle de Montespan, requiring a governess to superintend the education of her children, selected Madame Scarron, and obtained with some difficulty the king's assent to renew the pension which had been discontinued since the death of Anne of Austria. Louis, at first, almost refused to confirm the appointment, thinking the lady a *Precieuse*, but when introduced to his presence, she gradually softened his dislike, and ingratiated herself into his favour, until she became the rival of Mademoiselle de Montespan in his affections. The king had arrived at that period of life when the flutter of dissipation, and the gaiety of pleasure, begin to pall upon the mind; and his mistresses, not being always so submissive in their conduct, or so sensible in their conversation as he could desire, the good sense and retiring manners of Madame de Maintenon, as she was now styled, attracted his observation, and commanded his admiration. The sedulous attention she paid to the queen, who died in her arms, and her watchfulness over one of the children of Mademoiselle de Montespan, during a long illness, gave the king an opportunity of receiving those little kindnesses which insensibly steal into the heart and create reciprocal sympathies. "She knows well how to love, and there would be pleasure in being beloved by her" remarked Louis, after retiring from one of these interviews. By degrees she effectually

supplanted Mademoiselle de Montespan, whom she compelled to retire from court; and her ambition, vividly excited by the flattering condescensions of the king, now led her to aspire to that exalted position she was eventually destined to attain. "At forty-five," says she, "a woman can no longer inspire love. But he gives me the fairest hopes: I send him away always in sorrow, but never in despair."

Louis XIV. had inherited from his mother deep sentiments of piety, and whatever may be the faults or imprudences which defaced his moral conduct we do not believe his bitterest enemies can charge him with showing any deliberate disrespect to religion, or with treating its services in a spirit of levity and unconcern. Unfortunately, like too many men of an enthusiast cast of mind, he became a bigoted and unrelenting persecutor; but his sins in this respect arose rather from error and superstition, than from hypocrisy or dissimulation. His conscience had long struggled and revolted against the immoral life he was leading with the ladies of the court, but its remonstrances had hitherto been heard without avail. If he dismissed Mademoiselle de Montespan one week, he recalled her to favour the next. If he showed some firmness of character for a little while, the attractions and fascinations of beauty soon seduced him again from the path of rectitude. In truth, he might well be described, as one of those erring mortals

"Who know the right, yet still the wrong pursue."

Madame de Maintenon, reading the secret troubles that weighed upon the king's heart, determined to

attempt his reformation. With boldness she pointed out to him the impropriety of his unbecoming conduct, and seriously exhorted him to correct his vicious life, by discarding the mistresses from court. To render her moral rebukes more piercing, she superadded the fears of religion, and acting upon a mind of a credulous and timid nature, complete success attended her exertions. Affected by the pious admonitions of his virtuous instructress, Louis consented to follow the proffered advice, but in listening to the reproofs of such a gentle teacher he had become insensibly captivated by her winning manners, and intralled by her persuasive discourse. He no longer found satisfaction in any counsel but hers, and seemed ill at ease when the decorum of his station prevented him from enjoying her society. The humble origin, the obscure position, and the previous history of Madame de Maintenon, must have been viewed with much repugnance, as well as occasioned many doubts and perplexities; but the philter was too potent and alluring to be refused, and in 1685, she who had nursed and tended the humble Scarron, became the wife of the proudest sovereign in Europe. Whether she was truly sincere in her efforts to reclaim the king from his vicious career, or whether she only acted with a view to favour her own ambitious designs, has ever remained a contested point; both of these motives, perhaps, in some measure, influenced her conduct, for we cannot suppose her to have been wholly insensible to self-interest, when so rich a prize appeared placed almost within reach. Although not distinguished by genius

or originality, she was unquestionably endowed with very superior talent, and showed upon all occasions that rare gift of displaying and using every intellectual quality she possessed to the greatest advantage. Her conduct was uniformly characterised by that watchful circumspection and remarkable prudence which more frequently open the way to success, than do the brilliant but less cautious actions of hasty and intemperate minds. Before venturing upon any perilous undertaking, or hazarding any dangerous enterprise, she weighed well the various circumstances which should regulate her course; and if the issue threatened to prove unfavourable, she invariably preserved a loophole to admit of a timely and secure retreat. Her austere adherence to the practice and observance of religious duty was probably sincere; her morality seems to have been irreproachable, and the general tenour of her conduct might pass in courts as a model of virtue and decorum; but she was incapable of making those sacrifices which a generous heart will sometimes risk even to its own injury, to spare a rival or to screen a dependent. Assuredly, she was not one of those "who will lay down their life for their friend." During the persecution of the Huguenots she might, if inclined, have interceded to mitigate the severity of that dreadful and exterminating warfare. In the dispersion of the ill-fated Jansenists of Port Royal, she appears rather to have encouraged than attempted to moderate the harsh measures adopted by the king against that inoffensive community. Although the pamphlet of Racine, upon the condition of the

nation, which offended Louis, was written at her request, she had not the candour to confess it, or the generosity to defend her absent friend. She permitted Fenelon to remain in exile, when her wish, if expressed, would have been sufficient to occasion his recall. She forebore to contradict the calumnious aspersions directed against the Duke of Orleans, respecting the sudden deaths in the Royal Family, although she must have felt convinced that such charges rested upon no real foundation. In truth, from prudential motives and selfish considerations, her conduct seems to have been shaped entirely so as to favour her own interests; and, however much we may admire the uncommon tact and consummate art by which for thirty years she maintained her influential position, but little will be found in the history of her career to kindle those emotions of veneration and respect that may sometimes be evoked, when we are contemplating the actions of individuals whose opportunities have been confined to a far more humble and obscure sphere. In her intercourse with society she displayed that stoical calmness and prudential reserve, which prove so favourable to the advancement of worldly interests, but we seldom find her melting into tenderness or warming into enthusiasm, and it might as truly be said of her, as it was of Fontenelle, "that she never laughed or cried." Her discreet advice relative to the affairs of the state, her unwearyed zeal for the welfare of the king, and the laudable efforts she employed to exclude profligacy and licentiousness from the court, merit the highest encomiums,

and it is no slight testimony to the intrinsic worth of her character, when the state of society, during the term that she exercised paramount influence, is contrasted with its condition, either previous to her elevation or subsequent to her death. She attained all that she could have either hoped or desired. She gained the object of her ambition—"a name." Princes, ministers, priests, generals, courtiers, bent the knee before her, and showed themselves solicitous to obtain her favour. She became almost the equal of one of the most powerful monarchs the world has ever seen. Yet amidst all her successes and triumphs, there were periods when she seemed to pine for her former obscurity ; and if any homily be required to paint the vanity and insufficiency of gratified ambition to procure real happiness, it may be found in the conversation and correspondence she held with her intimate friends. Thus, writing to the Princesse des Ursins, she says, "I feel too well that there is no compensation for the loss of liberty." Again, in looking into a fish-pond at Marly, she remarked to a friend who was standing by, "You see how languid the carp are ; they are like me, they regret their mud." Considering her character as a whole, we may regard her as a virtuous and estimable woman, who, though not displaying any extraordinary or brilliant qualities of mind, uniformly distinguished herself by remarkable good sense and propriety of conduct. Her selfishness and want of affection may be in some measure excused, when we reflect upon the difficulties and vicissitudes of her early life. She does not appear to have acquired

much influence in the court until she had passed her fiftieth year, and as the habits and opinions are then for the most part unalterably formed, we need not be surprised to observe, that after her elevation to power she continued to follow the dictates of self-interest and personal ambition. In domestic life she seems to have been an amiable and well-informed companion, seldom permitting her temper to show any moroseness, or her disposition to lose its original mildness. Many actions of kindness that she performed, indicate that her nature was not wholly devoid of benevolent feelings, and the fact that her domestic attendant Nanon Balbieux, who had been the constant companion of her adversity, was permitted to share her prosperity, proves that she soared far above the vulgar prejudice which many persons adopt, of discarding their humble connections when raised by adventitious circumstances far above them in the scale of social rank. She cannot be accused of resorting to hypocrisy, or of employing the arts of misrepresentation and deceit to obtain an unfair advantage over her enemies. In one of her letters she writes thus, "I proceed straightforward, and only think of acting well. I scarcely ever write anything that I should be sorry for others to read. I have always proceeded with great frankness, and found no disadvantage from it. It seems to me that there is as much skill as there is virtue in uprightness of conduct." Her faults were rather those of omission than of commission, and considering the manner in which she obtained admission to the court, some apology may be offered for the apathy she evinced

when her friends stood in need of her warmest sympathy and most earnest support. She could not, perhaps, assume that independent bearing or that complete authority which she might have exercised, had her position been fortified by the imposing privileges of birth and hereditary right. In the palmy height of her grandeur, she must have often remembered the humble avenue through which she had entered the august scene, and reflected upon the precariousness of that power which only rests upon the insecure foundations of royal favour. Several remarks in her private correspondence, prove that she was far from being ignorant of the impending dangers which threatened the stability of the monarchy, and that, if she had dared, she could have offered some very seasonable advice to prevent their approach. Thus, in one place she says, "I am of opinion that kings ought to sacrifice their glory to the good of their subjects." In another—"The court devises every means to get rid of its afflictions, the courtiers play, hunt, walk, night and day; but this is not natural. Time alone can work the grand cure." Again she writes, "I feel that it would be much more to the advantage of the country, if the king would desist from war, and turn his attention and resources to the internal improvement of the nation." When placed in comparison with the De Phalarias, the De Pries, and the Dubarris of a later day, she rises to a lofty eminence, towering far above her rivals, and if we are to judge her by such a standard, she may be justly deemed one of the most reputable and deserving favourites that ever entered the court of any king.

Although Louis XIV. laboured under the impression that he was capable of directing all public affairs by his own ability, yet he constantly stood in need of an adviser to corroborate his opinions, or to alter them with such skilful tact that he should not perceive they had been changed. Mazarin, Colbert, and Louvois, successively performed the task of supervision, but subsequent to the fall of the latter minister, this delicate function was fulfilled by Madame de Maintenon. The ascendancy which she exercised in the royal Cabinet, has afforded her enemies an ample field for traducing her character. She is represented as using all kinds of trickery and dissimulation to gain her private ends, of caballing with the ministers to deceive the king, and of descending to the meanest artifices to procure the advancement of her favourites. These charges are brought forward against Madame de Maintenon upon the authority of St. Simon; but as this writer uniformly evinces a bitter and unscrupulous hostility towards her, the evidence of such a prejudiced witness can be hardly deemed trustworthy or conclusive. Several historians, guided by the ungenerous remarks of this cynical courtier, have attempted to prove that the king was a mere puppet in the hands of Madame de Maintenon and his ministers, and that the manner in which the vacant offices of the public administration were filled, affords unanswerable arguments for the condemnation of all absolute government. But the truth of these grave accusations requires to be better substantiated and more clearly established, before such sweeping conclusions can be

tacitly admitted. However indiscriminate might be the dispensation of honours and the disposal of patronage under Louis XIV., there have been many governments boasting their Cortes, their Commons, and their National Assemblies, in which this function of the executive power has been administered with a far greater amount of venality and corruption. Louis XIV. and his council certainly displayed more correctness and impartiality in the selection of their public officials, than did either the sovereigns or the ministers of the English government for nearly a century after the Revolution of 1688. The open and avowed sale of offices under Walpole, the corrupt distribution of favours by which the Duke of Newcastle maintained the pre-eminence of the Pelham family, and the Scotch favouritism that Lord Bute practised so long as the country would tolerate him, must appear to a disinterested observer, offences far more dishonest than any which can be cited against the cabinet of Louis XIV. It is notorious that under the two first sovereigns of the House of Hanover, political parties were so equally divided in the Lords that the fate of the ministry constantly depended upon the votes of the bishops; hence, in the selection of candidates for episcopal promotion, the minister of the day shewed himself far more solicitous about the political tenets of the claimants, than the depth of their erudition, or their fitness to fulfil the episcopal function. The conduct of Louis XIV. and his councillors was neither perfect nor immaculate, yet there have been many administrations in which the public interests of

France were less consulted. An incapable commander like Villeroi might be occasionally preferred to such accomplished generals as Villars and Berwick. A prelate like Harlay might be raised to a higher rank in the ministry of the church than the devout Fenelon ; yet it would be difficult to point out any period in French history when the dignities of the Gallican Church were conferred with more circumspection, or when the clergy were more uniformly distinguished for the purity of their morals, the fervour of their devotion, or the lustre of their talents. Madame de Maintenon is accused of favouring her own relations and partizans, to the prejudice of more worthy and meritorious candidates. She is taunted with endeavouring to push the fortunes of her dependents at court, by a species of deceitful cunning and despicable intrigue. Perhaps upon some occasions she did appear too earnest in advocating the interests of her friends ; but even St. Simon admits that the king often refused to listen to her applications. "Such a one," the monarch would say, "is a good courtier ; it is not his fault that all Madam's relations are not preferred." Upon turning to the memoirs of the Marquis de Dangeau, many instances may be found in which Louis not only showed great impartiality, but a sense of justice that redounds very much to his credit. "The king transacted business with M. de Pontchartrain this evening as usual, and he made a promotion in the galleys. Only one gally was vacant, and M. de P. in enumerating to the king those officers who might be selected for this appointment, dwelt upon the name of the

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le chevalier de Froulé The king said to him, "I per-
ceive that you interest yourself for M. de Froulé, and
he deserves it; but there are others older than he who
deserve it as well—they have no interest and I am
bound therefore to take care of them," and he gave
the place to the next in seniority." But can the minis-
ters of the nineteenth century give so good an
account of their stewardship as to affirm that they are
never influenced by the ties of kindred or friendship?
Do they invariably select the most worthy candidates
or the most meritorious aspirants? Do they always
look to the welfare of the state, and forget the claims
of dependents and the motives of self-interest? We
have no sympathies for absolute power, we detest des-
potism in whatever shape it may appear, but it is not
just to hold up the courts of absolute princes to public
odium and contempt by publishing their vices and
concealing their virtues, merely for the purpose of
giving a more vivid colouring to the advantages
which spring from a free government.

The charitable munificence displayed by Louis XIV.
on various occasions, palliates, in some degree, the
criminal extravagance with which he squandered the
public treasures. He possessed a kindly heart that
would sometimes open widely to the tale of pity; and
notwithstanding the cruel persecutions he sanctioned
when religion was in question, his domestic intercourse
with the court affords many proofs that he could per-
form the noblest actions of benevolence, when appealed
to by the objects of calamity and misfortune. Nothing
could be more generous than his reception of James II.

and Mary of Modena, when they sought the protection of France after their unhappy flight in 1688. He gave the English king precedence of rank, and furnished him with a suite of guards and officers exactly similar to his own; while to prevent James from feeling the humiliation of receiving a gift, he caused a purse of ten thousand pistoles to be placed on the bureau of his bed-chamber. When this unfortunate prince was setting out shortly afterwards, to attempt the recovery of his kingdom, Louis, in parting with him, finely said, "The best wish I can make for you, Sir, is that I may never see you again; if, however, fortune should oblige you to return, you will still find me what you have already found me." Many traits of the kind manner with which Louis treated even his humblest domestics are recorded in some of the memoirs of the day. Thus we find, "The Marquis De Coigny died after a tedious illness; he had no place, but during his long illness the king had the charity to send him assistance in secret." Again, Dangeau observes, "After the council, the king called the good old Montchevreuil into his closet, and said everything that was kind and the most proper to alleviate his sorrow for the loss of his wife. He concluded by saying, Don't look upon me as your master or your benefactor, but as your best friend; and in that character consult me upon all that can interest you or your family." Racine, when in ill health, was permitted by the king to receive the whole of his pension, though every one else was required to pay half to the public service. These are redeeming qualities in the character of Louis, and shine forth

upon the medallion of his fame with richer lustre than do many of the more ostentatious actions which were deemed by contemporaries the glory of his career.

During the early part of the reign of Louis XIV., the court was too much engaged in the festivities and pageantries of pleasure to admit of that devout tone of religious feeling which characterises its history subsequent to the elevation of Madame de Maintenon. No sooner had this lady fairly established her influence in the palace, than she commenced a reformation in the habits of the courtiers similar to that which she had already effected in the king. She prescribed an adherence to certain laws of morality, and a rigid observance of the religious duties enforced by the church, as passports required to be shown by all who hoped or aspired to gain the favour of royalty ; and so successful were her efforts, that a sensible improvement in the moral conduct of the court is observable from the very period which marks her rise to power. The date of her marriage to the king, forms as it were the portal to a new epoch in the transactions of the court. Piety then became the order of the day. The courtiers ceased to indulge in that constant round of frivolity and dissipation which had hitherto been so conspicuous in their actions. They acknowledged by their altered behaviour that a restraint was placed upon their conduct, and finding the king favourably inclined to the views of his sedate mistress, they yielded a ready obedience to her austere injunctions. Never was a change more sudden or more marked. The services of the church were increased threefold ;

masses were multiplied beyond number; fasts were observed with especial strictness; the courtiers went to prayers as often as they went to meals; marshals never appeared in the palace without a prayer-book in their hands; soldiers carried mass books in their knapsacks to the camp, and generals lost the opportunity of making decisive movements in the field by expending the time in confessing to their priests. Devotion became the passion of society; and the court, from having been a Paphian bower of gallantry and love, assumed the sombre gloom and ascetic aspect of a Carthusian convent. The devout example set by the monarch and Madame de Maintenon, was soon imitated by all who were honoured with an admission to the domestic circles of the palace. A striking improvement was visible in the habits and manners of the courtiers. Licentiousness of conduct, and libertine conversation, were no longer tolerated; and however eminent might be the abilities of candidates who aspired to obtain promotion in the state, all chances of success were forfeited if their character happened to be notoriously immoral. Religious subjects became the constant theme of conversation, to the exclusion of every other topic. It was no longer considered decorous to criticise the music of the last opera, to repeat the sarcasms of the last comedy, or to gossip about the coqueties and intrigues of the last assembly, but every one assuming a serious air of severe gravity extolled the eloquence of the favourite preacher of the day, and passed glowing eulogiums upon the merits of his last discourse. Instead of the courtly pageant, there was

the religious jubilee ; instead of the musical fete, there was the sacred oratorio ; instead of ladies conversing about hoops and patches, they became polemics, and discussed the tenets of Jansenism or the efficacy of indulgences. Even the stage adapted its representations to the prevailing taste, the noble tragedies of *Athalie* and *Esther* having been written by Racine to gratify the altered inclinations of the court. It is not to be supposed that all who appeared to acquiesce in the practice of this devout mode of life, by a strict performance of the external forms and ceremonies of religion, were sincerely pious. Many of those who professed the deepest penitence for their former indiscretions, and who submitted themselves to the mortifications and self-denials of the most austere penance, were, perhaps, coldly disguising their real sentiments of worldliness under the mask of an artful and consummate hypocrisy ; but we should be placing the sincerity of human nature at a very low estimate, if we came to the conclusion that no real moral improvement was produced by the change of religious discipline to which society at large submitted during the latter years of the reign of Louis XIV. Meritorious and laudable however, as may be these efforts to bring mankind to an almost superhuman state of perfection, by making religion the sole duty and business of life, it is a well-attested fact that whenever society has attempted such a task, the temporary amendment has been followed by an unusual outbreak of infidelity and crime, which far outweighs the benefit obtained from the previous predominance of an ascetic piety.

The fiery zeal of the Crusaders, was succeeded by the monstrous extortions of papal avarice; the stern fanaticism of the English Puritan, was replaced by the dissolute debaucheries of the Restoration; while the gloomy devotion of the court of Louis XIV., at length merged into the unbounded profligacies and the licentious profanities of the Regency.

Before the reader can understand the rival parties into which the court of France was divided at the death of Louis XIV., it will be necessary to make a few observations upon the remarkable dispute between the Jesuits and the Jansenists. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the order of the Jesuits had become perceptibly vitiated, both as regards the character and conduct of its members. The ranks of the "Society of Jesus" were no longer filled with those virtuous and learned men, who in the preceding century had effected so much for the regeneration of Catholicism, and whose energy had served as a barrier to defend the Papacy from the encroaching inroads of Protestant ambition, but in their place many persons of mean ability had gradually gained admission to the brotherhood, who, by their voluptuous style of living, and unwearied attention to worldly interests, entirely changed the original character and purpose of the institution. When the order was in its infancy, the practice of private devotion in the houses of the professed, and the renunciation of all worldly goods by the members, were insisted on to a severe extent; but in proportion as the society assumed an aristocratic tendency, it departed more and more widely from the

fundamental principles upon which it had been originally established. After the elevation of Oliva to the supreme direction, a great change became visible in the proceedings of the members. They then not only claimed the right to retain their private property, but entered as a company into vast commercial transactions, by establishing a banking business, and making Lisbon the central point of their trading communications. Such an innovation could not fail to be followed by the most demoralising results, as well as to affect in a sensible manner, the whole organization and internal economy of the society. A rapid degeneracy ensued, and instead of the order remaining as a brotherhood of devout men, bound together by the ties of a sincere and fervent enthusiasm for the advancement and defence of the Catholic Faith, it became transformed into a mercenary corporation, the members of which were either intently employed in amassing worldly riches, or eagerly striving to ascend the highest pinnacles of human ambition. To maintain the powerful influence they had acquired as a religious order, and to square the principles their predecessors had formerly professed, with the new practices to which they had thought proper to condescend, the very doctrines of religion were perverted; and under shelter of the convenient subterfuges thus formed, an excuse was found for every error, and an extenuation for every crime. As the education of youth was principally entrusted to the Jesuits, they possessed all the requisite machinery to obtain a considerable influence in directing the

course of European politics; nor did they shrink from the grave responsibility of resorting to an improper application of so delicate a trust for the furtherance of their evil purposes and base designs. The academy, the pulpit, and the confessional, were all prostituted to favour the ambitious views of the order; and so completely dominant had its members become, that for a period they appeared to be almost omnipotent. Nothing could exceed the indefatigable zeal and inflexible determination with which they pursued their arduous vocation of aggrandising both the religious and secular power of the Society. They permitted no obstacles to impede their advance. They shaped their opinions and tenets to every emergency that arose, and were lax or rigid, accomodating or stern, exactly as they imagined either the one course or the other would bring the minds of the penitent most effectually under their controul. Sometimes they espoused the cause of popular freedom, and directed the knife of the assassin against the powerful king or the haughty ruler; sometimes they inculcated slavish principles of obedience to royalty, and assisted arbitrary monarchs in keeping their subjects under the yoke of a most remorseless and unrelenting tyranny. Nothing can well exceed the low standard of morality to which the Jesuits had sank, after their authority over society had become confirmed and established by the virtues, the talents, and the piety of their predecessors. A century had sufficed to wear out the primal purity of the order, and sully its original whiteness with the ineradicable stain of

corruption and guilt. How widely different were the aspirations and desires of such men as Gottofredi, Nickel, and Oliva, from the fiery zeal, the passionate devotion, and the unconquerable heroism which animated and shone through the minds of Loyola, Xavier, and Laynez, when the mighty task of purifying and regenerating Catholicism was commenced.

At the middle of the seventeenth century, the Catholic Church appeared to be rapidly losing its vital energy, from the pernicious manner in which the Jesuits had dared to modify and alter several of its fundamental doctrines. To such an extent, indeed, did some of the Jesuit authors err in their controversial writings, that the Inquisition at Rome had not hesitated to condemn their works as heretical and unsound. Many of the contemporary religious orders also protested against the perversions of scriptural truth, which were authorised by the directing manuals of the Society; but the opposition of these monastic confraternities was, for the most part, exerted without avail. The Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Capuchins, each divorced themselves from the "Society of Jesus," and refused to countenance the artful machinations by which the members of this renowned order were enabled to maintain such a pre-eminent influence. The Jesuits, however, in defiance of their rivals, still held possession of the vantage ground; the position upon which they stood intrenched, appearing impregnable in comparison with the inferior ground occupied by their opponents. A champion was at length found worthy to measure arms with them upon the field of

polemical controversy, and whose weapons were destined to inflict a mortal wound in the encounter that ensued. Jansenism sprang up in the very bosom of the Catholic Church; and from the ranks of its disciples, came forth a more powerful antagonist than the Jesuits had ever yet confronted.

“Their armour helped their harm, crushed in and bruised,
Into their substance pent, which wrought them pain
Implacable, and many a dolorous groan.”

The origin of this celebrated system of religious doctrine, is mainly attributable to the joint labours of St. Cyran, and Jansenius, the bishop of Ypres, from the latter of whom the sect derives its name. So early as 1552, a Doctor of Louvaine, named Baius, had published some theological speculations upon the subject of necessity and predestination, but his writings were condemned by the Pope, and refuted by Molina, the Spanish Jesuit, whose followers, supporting the opposite doctrines of free will, became afterwards known as the Molinists. Jansenius and St. Cyran, while studying together at Bayonne, revived the views of Baius, and framed from the works of St. Augustine, a system of religious belief, in which they declared that the will of man is not free, but held in constant bondage by the desire of earthly things, and that grace was the only efficacious aid which could serve to raise it from this wretched and prostrate condition. These doctrines are, strictly speaking, Calvinistic, or, what in the present day we should term, Evangelical, yet many of the early Jansenists, to efface the imputation of being disobedient to the Catholic Church, attacked

the Protestants, and assisted Bossuet in his controversy with Claude, the most able of the French Huguenots. It was not till a few years after the death of Jansenius that his doctrines attracted much attention, when a society of learned men at the famous convent of Port Royal, having republished them with many additions, the signal was given for the commencement of that acrimonious controversy which raged in France for nearly a century. The Pope, the prelates and the clergy of the Gallican Church, all united in condemning the five propositions of Jansenius; and in consequence of their representations, Arnauld, the most eloquent advocate of the Jansenists, was expelled the Sorbonne. Among the visitors who frequented the society of the recluses of Port Royal, was a youth who listened to their discourses with unusual attention, and who became inspired with veneration and respect for the simple virtues they practised, and the sublime principles they professed. Naturally of a pensive and religious cast of mind, Pascal entered into the controversy with that zealous enthusiasm which is so essential to those who aspire to undertake the defence of a sinking cause. Gifted with the inspiration of an original genius, and endowed with a mind distinguished for its clearness of perception and its energy of thought, the youthful philosopher was eminently calculated to defend the party whose views he had espoused. He attacked the Jesuits in the very strongholds of their power, and by the sarcastic wit, the bitter irony, and the unrivalled eloquence of his writings, completely turned the tide of public opinion

in favour of his Jansenist friends. From the effect produced by the publication of the Provincial Letters, Jesuitism never perfectly recovered. The sophistical casuistry, the deceitful ambiguity, and the false morality of the Order, were so ably exposed, and so unanswerably demonstrated in these celebrated compositions, that the followers of Loyola became objects of public contempt, and their name passed into a very byword of derision. "The comedies of Moliere," says Voltaire, "have not more wit than the former part of these letters, nor the writings of Bossuet more sublimity than the latter." To the pen of Pascal the Jansenists were greatly indebted, since the more erudite but abstruse reasonings of the learned philosophers of Port Royal, such as Arnauld, Lancelot, Nicole, and De Saci, had entirely failed to engage public attention, or were limited to such a narrow circle of readers that the Jesuits could afford to treat them with disregard. But the caustic satire and the lively wit of the Provincial Letters were not to be so easily disposed of. The victim had been stricken in a vital part, and the agony arising from the wound could neither be dissembled nor concealed. The Jesuits were, however, far too sensible of their own criminality and unworthiness, to venture upon an open refutation of the serious charges with which Pascal had assailed their reputation; and feeling how ridiculously weak their cause would appear if a written vindication of their conduct were attempted, they prudently had recourse to a subtler and more secret method of revenge. From the overthrow they had sustained by the publication of

the Letters, the Jesuits at length rose up with redoubled malice, and a full determination to avenge the humiliating mortifications of their defeat. Filled with resentment, and thirsting for revenge, they summoned up all the energy they possessed to strike a death-blow at their triumphant antagonists. As the Marshal de Vihè wittily remarked, "There must be some secret in all this. The Jesuits are never so excited when nothing but the glory of God is at stake." In their eagerness for retaliation, they descended to use the meanest artifices, and employ the most discreditable agencies. Falsehood, misrepresentation, deceit, were resorted to without hesitation, whenever such means appeared likely to effect the required object. They succeeded in persuading the Parliament of Provence to order the Provincial Letters to be burned by the common hangman in the streets, and obtained from the Sorbonne a formula condemning Jansenism, which they required the nuns of Port Royal to sign, or to suffer dispersion in the neighbouring convents. Many of the Jansenists, from an anxiety to preserve the peace of the church, relented sufficiently to sign the document, but Pascal instead of approving their moderation, exclaimed "You wish to save Port Royal; you may betray the truth, but you cannot save it." The Jesuits, not satisfied with harassing the unfortunate nuns, had invoked the aid of the Papacy, for the purpose of exterminating the heresy of Jansenism. They pointed out to the Pope, that in the propositions of Jansenius the infallibility of Papal authority was distinctly denied, and they induced him

to appoint a council, to undertake a formal investigation of the Jansenist tenets, in order that if the doctrines promulgated by the sect could be proved heterodox, their general condemnation might follow. The Jesuits now displayed an uncommon activity, and Father Coruet, one of their most active and enterprising leaders, exultingly declared that their opponents were fairly in the trap, and that nothing but mismanagement would permit their escape. Innocent X. had always been a reluctant actor in these vindictive persecutions, and notwithstanding a full majority of the consultors pronounced a complete condemnation of the Jansenist propositions, he hesitated before proceeding to declare them as heretical and unsound. "When he came to the edge of the chasm," says Pallavicini, "and measured the greatness of the leap with his eyes, he held back, and was not to be moved to any further advance." Hoping, however, to secure the peace of the church, by re-establishing unity of doctrine, he at length yielded to the urgent remonstrances of the Jesuits, and published the bull. The Jansenists now put themselves in the wrong, by denying that the propositions were to be found in the book of Jansenius, and by strenuously asserting that they had never interpreted them in the sense in which they had been condemned. Alexander VII., a man of unscrupulous character, soon afterwards succeeded Innocent X., and to this declaration of the Jansenists he replied that "the five propositions were assuredly extracted from the book of Jansenius, and were condemned in the sense he had given to them." The

and declared that "they would not contest the papal decision, but maintain an absolute silence on the subject." Thus, by a few reciprocal concessions, an amicable adjustment was effected. A truce between the controversialists was concluded, and the recluses of Port Royal once more returned to their quiet hermitage to pursue those pious and unpretending labours which formed the solace of their earthly pilgrimage.

The Jesuits having failed to destroy their Jansenist adversaries, by bringing them under the dogmatic condemnations of the Sorbonne, and subjecting them to the fulminating censures of Papal intolerance, next sought the aid of civil governments to effect the despicable purpose they had so long kept in view. Although the Society of Jesus had originally been instituted for the sole object of defending the Papacy from the encroachments of schismatics, yet in the reign of Louis XIV. the leading members of the Order entered into a strict alliance with the House of Bourbon, and did not scruple upon several occasions to support the interests of this ambitious family in its frequent ecclesiastical disputes with the Pope. The French Jesuits perceiving the new lever which they must seize to regain their former influence, not only began to treat papal decrees with indifference and disregard, but frequently refused to hold any communication with the nuncio when their assistance was required to carry out the political designs projected by the possessors of the Vatican. By a system of adroit manoeuvre, they contrived always to keep one of their most crafty members in the situation of con-

fessor to Louis XIV., hence this monarch became daily more and more a mere tool in their hands, as well as a most available ally to forward any schemes in which they might deem it politic to engage. When approaching his end, the king openly confessed how unreservedly he had committed his conscience to their keeping, and how implicitly he had followed the counsel they had given him. "Gentlemen," said he, "I die in the faith and obedience of the Church. I know nothing of the dogmas by which it is divided. I have followed the advice I have received. I have only done what I was desired to do. If I have erred, my guides alone must answer before God, whom I call upon to witness this assertion." Obedience remained a word ever uppermost in the mind of Louis XIV.; and as the Jesuits continually inculcated a rigid observance of this principle, their interests and opinions proved far more acceptable in his sight, than did the dogged steadfastness, and the more independent bearing of the Jansenists. Louis detested opposition under whatever aspect it might appear, more particularly if it assumed anything approaching to the idea of political freedom, or threatened to interfere with his favourite system of absolute government. The Jesuits perceiving the weak point in the mind of their patron, poured all the force of their assault in this direction. They persuaded Louis that men who disputed the doctrines of the Church, would not scruple a whit the less to question the authority of royalty, or carp at the prerogatives of the crown, if once they were permitted to gain sufficient power to commence

an attack. The king, who was completely under the guidance of his confessor, entrusted the power of the crown, then necessarily very great, entirely to his discretion, and this functionary preserving a close alliance with Harlai, the Archbishop of Paris, their combined influence in the supreme ecclesiastical councils bore down everything before it. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the confessor and the archbishop determined to renew the Jansenist persecutions. Harlai commenced the attack by expelling several of the most distinguished theologians from Port Royal, and forbidding the admission of novices to the convent. Even those who escaped banishment were so annoyed that they left France to seek a calmer retreat in the Netherlands, from whence they continued to defend their religious convictions against the rancorous malice of their assailants. It would, perhaps, be difficult to point out a more disreputable character than that of Harlai. As Madame de Sevigne naively remarked when he died, "They wish to write his biography, but two things are wanting—his life and his death." The understanding between his successor, the Cardinal de Noailles, and Pere Le Tellier, who had replaced La Chaise as the king's confessor, was not so harmonious. Noailles disliked the Jesuits, while Le Tellier was ready to sacrifice everything to favour their interests. Madame de Maintenon in one of her letters has described the climax to which matters had arrived: "The affairs of religion get worse daily. Cardinal de Noailles opposes the Jesuits and would get rid of them; the king supports them—judge of the consequences."

The Cardinal had always shrank from taking a prominent part in the Jansenist dispute, but the critical position in which he was placed when raised to the archiepiscopal office, precluded him from continuing the tolerant course he had formerly pursued. The Jesuits were now once more reconciled to the Holy See, and Clement XI. perceiving the importance of preserving such valuable allies, determined to court their favour by a renewal of the Jansenist persecutions. In this policy the brotherhood fully concurred, and hence the celebrated bull, known in ecclesiastical history as the *Vineam Domini Sabaoth*, was issued, authorising an unreserved condemnation of all persons who upheld the Jansenist tenets of justification and grace, even in their most modified sense. The contentions respecting the disputed right of the *regale* which had so long placed the French government in hostile opposition to the Vatican, having also been amicably adjusted, Le Tellier, the leader of the Jesuit party, now doubly supported by the influence of the Crown, as well as that of the Papacy, felt himself in a position to compel Noailles to resume the offensive against the unfortunate Jansenists. At the instigation of his confessor, Louis XIV. commanded the archbishop to demand the signatures of the Port Royalists to the bull of Clement XI. The Cardinal, deficient in moral courage, had not the boldness to offer any opposition to the mandates of his royal master. Courtier-like, the voice of resistance could never pass from his lips. He had breathed the atmosphere of Versailles too freely to have escaped its

enervating influence. He knew how to sacrifice his convictions at the shrine of self-interest. A Jansenist in heart he became a Jesuit in practice. Archiepiscopal decrees issued rapidly from his hand. He declared that "respectful silence is not a sufficient deference for apostolical constitutions." He passed sentence upon Port Royal. The admission of new members to the monastery was forbidden. Many of the conventual estates were disposed of by confiscation. The sacraments of the church were interdicted there. Priestly absolution was refused to the dying. The benediction was withheld. The grave was unblest. Excluded from the pale of the church, and stigmatised as condemned heretics, the Jansenists appeared to be deprived of all earthly consolation and human sympathy. In vain did the persecuted sisterhood remonstrate with their cruel oppressors, and protest against the wrongs to which they were subjected. In vain did their distinguished advocates exhaust the weapons of forensic skill in pleading their defence. In vain did the family of the virtuous Arnauld rebuke their remorseless antagonists, in a strain of fervid and impassioned eloquence worthy of such a cause. All resistance proved useless and ineffectual. The fate of the Jansenists was decided. Their extermination was irrevocably decreed. Their enemies were too revengeful and determined to halt in the gratification of accumulated malice and vindictive hatred. At length, in the year 1709, a papal bull was obtained from Rome, commanding the final suppression of the monastery, and dispersion of its inmates. An armed force, under

the guidance of D'Argenson, the Lieutenant of Police, entered the sacred edifice to commence upon this unholy work of sacrilegious desolation. The nuns were seized and conveyed away by force in separate carriages to distant prisons. The chapel and the cloistered buildings were levelled to the ground. The very graves of the cemetery were torn open, and the relics of the dead disinterred, amid profane scenes of disgusting depravity, and most indecent levity. Jesuitism revenged itself upon the ashes of its foes, allowing its evil passions and malicious animosities to invade even the sacred precincts of the tomb. But the hand of retributive punishment was destined ere long to avenge these scandalous outrages of the humblest claims and holiest obligations of humanity. A century did not elapse after this disgraceful violation of the illustrious dead in their repose, before the mouldering corpse of him who had figured as the chief abettor of this loathsome crime, was dragged from its resting place in the vaults of St. Denis, and contemptuously hurled upon the ground, amidst the bacchanalian orgies, and impious revelries of a revolutionary and infuriated populace. The flight of Nemesis may be slow, but it is not the less certain. Who can escape her terrible pursuit, or avert the vengeance of her inexorable arm?

Although the triple league which resulted from this formidable coalition between the French Crown, the Order of the Jesuits, and the Papacy, had proved sufficient to destroy the sanctuary of Jansenism, and stifle, for a period, the voice of its most eminent teachers,

yet the tenets of the sect were still secretly entertained, and ardently cherished by a powerful and influential portion of the French nation. Jansenism, having disappeared by compulsion as a religious schism, next assumed a political type, and became a rallying point for all malcontents who desired to restrict the absolute power of the crown within more narrow limits, or who resolved to make a determined effort in defending the independence of the Gallican Church from the encroachments of Papal ambition. The Parliament of Paris, though imbued with a strong predilection for Jansenist principles, observed a respectful silence so long as Louis XIV. occupied the throne. In the next reign, however, we shall have occasion to show that this assembly became the principal antagonist of the Crown, and maintained a prominent position in the conflict which ensued between prerogative and privilege, until its pretensions were finally yielded in favour of a more memorable successor, the States General.

During the latter years of his reign, Louis XIV. had been deprived of nearly all his immediate descendants, by one of those fatal epidemics which then so often proved the scourge of society, and which, owing to the imperfect state of medical science, committed such destructive ravages whenever they appeared. The Dauphin, the Duke of Burgundy, and his eldest child, had each successively fallen victims to one of these terrible visitations of disease. Two years scarcely elapsed after this melancholy catastrophe, before the Duke de Berri was doomed to share their untimely fate; so that the second son of the Duke of Burgundy,

a child hereafter destined to be known in history as Louis XV., was the only direct surviving male heir of the royal line that remained. At the period to which we refer, this Prince appeared so delicate and puny, that it seemed highly improbable his life could be prolonged for many years; hence, when the advanced age of the reigning sovereign was taken into consideration, some precautionary regulations respecting the regal succession became advisable, to prevent the occurrence of future troubles. Nothing could be more calamitous than the pitiable condition to which Louis XIV. was reduced, by being thus suddenly deprived of nearly all his immediate descendants; but what aggravated the evil in a tenfold degree, and converted it into a national misfortune, was the fact that these deaths in the royal family laid the foundation for that aspiring ambition of the Orleans branch, which even to the present hour has never ceased to perplex French politics, and which has, without question, been a fertile source of mischief in producing those dynastic and revolutionary changes that deface the history of modern France. The legitimation of the children of Madame de Montespan was an act by which Louis XIV. gave the greatest offence, not only to the Princes of the Blood but to many of the ancient noblesse, yet under the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, we cannot see much impropriety in the course he pursued. The Duke du Maine, the Count de Toulouse, and their male descendants born in lawful marriage, were declared capable of succeeding to the crown, in the event that no legitimate prince of the royal family remained.

In the edict which authorised this legitimation of the king's natural children, an especial emphasis is laid upon the fact, that they are only to inherit the crown, *apres le dernier des princes du sang* ; and, considering the existing complexion of the government, it cannot be questioned but that if the legitimate race had by accident become extinct, these legitimised princes would have formed far more eligible substitutes than any candidate which the Parliament or the State Council could select. Politic as this measure may now appear, it was received with considerable disapprobation, and soon gave rise to a formidable division in the court, producing a rivalry that not only lasted until the death of the king, but exercised a material influence upon the events of the succeeding reign. Two distinct parties were formed, the one espousing the interests of the legitimate princes, the other willing to sacrifice every thing in favour of the king's legitimised children. The former counted among its ranks the Duke of Orleans, the Princes of Condè and of Conti, the Parliament of Paris, the Jansenist clergy, as well as a large proportion of the ancient noblesse. The latter was composed of Madame de Maintenon, the Duke du Maine, the Count de Toulouse, the whole fraternity of the Jesuits, and a majority of the courtiers and the clergy. As the health of the king declined, each faction eagerly aspired to acquire some legal document, which could confer upon them a right to undertake the future direction of public affairs, when the anticipated minority should arrive ; and hence every nerve was strained on either side by the rival forces, to obtain

from the dying monarch a testament favourable to their individual pretensions. As might naturally be expected, the party to which Madame de Maintenon and Le Tellier, the Jesuit confessor, were attached at length obtained a decisive advantage in the contest. A love of power had ever been the chief characteristic in the mind of Louis XIV., therefore, as we may easily suppose, he could not contemplate the resignation of authority to other hands, without evincing a certain irritability and petulance of temper. After repeated solicitations, however, he consented to express his wishes respecting the constitution of the regency, and the disposal of its various offices. The Council of Regency was to consist of the Duke of Orleans, the Duke du Maine, the Count de Toulouse, the chancellor, four marshals, four secretaries of state, and the comptroller-general. All measures of state brought before the council were to be decided by a majority of voices, the Duke of Orleans, as president, enjoying the privilege of giving a casting vote, should the opinions of the members happen to be equally divided. The education and guardianship of the young king were to be entrusted to the Duke du Maine, while in case of his decease, this office was to descend to his brother, the Count de Toulouse. Marshal Villeroi, the confidential friend of Madame de Maintenon, was appointed superintendent of the household, all the minor offices of the establishment being filled with persons known to be favourable to the interests of the Duke du Maine and his brother. By these arrangements, the Jesuit party concluded that they should contrive to secure a decided

predominance in the Regency Council, whenever the period for its actual nomination arrived; while the Jansenist, or Orleans party, remaining in perfect ignorance of the contents of the royal will, imagined the claims of their leader too weighty to be set aside. The document having been sealed, was presented to the President of the Parliament and the Attorney-General, to be concealed until its contents required to be made public; the king at the same time addressing them in the following terms: "*Messieurs c'est mon testament, il n'y a qui que ce soit que moi qui sache ce qu'il contient. Je vous le remets pour le garder au parlement a qui je ne puis donner un plus grand temoignage de mon estime, et de ma confiance que de l'en rendre depositaire.*" Language very different in its tone from that with which he had so often rebuked the members of the Parliament on former occasions, and evidently proving how distrustful he felt respecting their future obedience to his testamentary commands. At this conjuncture, a superficial observer might have imagined that the future triumph of the Jesuit party was inevitable and likely to be permanent. The Huguenots were banished and proscribed—the Jansenists were defeated and silenced. The Parliament, by their uniform subservience to the Crown, appeared to have almost abdicated their power. The Duke of Orleans, though nominally the most prominent member of the expected Regency, seemed likely to attain but little influence in guiding its decisions. The sequel, however, proved widely different, and before the succeeding reign had closed, the Jesuits were entirely suppressed; the

Parliaments were employed in maintaining a vigorous opposition to the crown; while the partisans of the Jansenist cause having degenerated into atheists and sceptics, were calling into existence that spirit of philosophic innovation, which was destined to level the monarchy with the dust, and to bring, for a period, the very name of religion into contempt.

With all its faults the government of Louis XIV. had never failed to ensure the allegiance and respect of the French nation. The people had shared in the glories of their monarch, and applauded his triumphs. They had overlooked his errors and sympathised with his misfortunes. Amidst all their murmurings about taxation and distress, the words resistance or rebellion never escaped their lips. They regarded their sovereign with those mingled feelings of adoration and reverence which characterise the devotion observed by the ancient nations to their Pagan gods, or which many of the Hindoo tribes now practise, when sacrificing to the idol deities of their mystic faith. They conferred upon him the title of "the Great," and deemed him worthy to rank with their favourite kings—St. Louis, Francis I., and Henri Quatre. His death opened the commencement of a new epoch, an epoch in which the vices and defects of absolute royalty were to suffer a palpable exposure; an epoch in which power was to pass into feeble hands, and authority to be entrusted to men of incompetent and vacillating minds; an epoch in which the privileged orders of society were to become more impoverished, more debased, and more corrupt, in which the people were to improve in civili-

sation, in intelligence, and in wealth ; an epoch in which the nation was to be ruled by statesmen who were neither gifted with the energy of a Richlieu, the craftiness of a Mazarin, or the discrimination of a Louis Quatorze. Society was about to divide into those rival parties, whose conflicting passions and hostile ambitions were destined never to cease till the Revolution was produced. In the ranks of the one party might be found champions stedfastly intent upon preserving monarchical absolutism with all its prerogatives unshackled, hereditary right with all its privileges unquestioned. In the ranks of the other might be seen assailants eager to break down the ramparts of regal despotism, by establishing some popular representative assembly which should effectually place the "sovereign power" of monarchy under the guidance and controul of public opinion, as well as compel the privileged orders of society to bear a proportionate share of the burden of taxation. The object of the one party was to defend "things as they were;" the object of the other, to establish "things as they ought to be." The one sought to maintain arbitrary power at the expense of liberty ; the other to assert the supremacy of public opinion at the expense of royalty. Prerogative and hereditary right were to be the war cries of the one ; liberty and equality those of the other. The crown was to be the emblem of the one ; the law that of the other. The one traced its claims back to Hugh Capet ; the other took Cromwell for its prototype and model. Between rivals so antagonistic, so hostile, so exasperated, nothing but

the day of battle could determine, and nothing but the hour of victory decide.

The patronage which Louis XIV. bestowed upon literature and the arts, unquestionably laid the foundation for a subsequent developement of that philosophic enquiry, which eventually proved so inimical to every established and accredited principle of the ancient regime. At first sight we might imagine that such a government as that of Louis XIV. would rather have tended to obstruct than favour the progress of intellectual improvement, yet it would perhaps be difficult to select any reign during which the French nation advanced with such rapid strides in their march towards the highest points of mental civilisation and literary fame. "The most eminent instance of the flourishing of learning in absolute governments," says Hume, "is that of France, which scarcely ever enjoyed any established liberty, and yet has carried the arts and sciences as near perfection as any other nation." Chateaubriand admits that the classical era of French literature is to be found in the age of Louis XIV. Another writer has eloquently observed of this monarch: "Turenne and Luxembourg were his generals; Colbert, Louvois, and Torcy, his statesmen; Vauban was his engineer; Perrault constructed his palaces; they were adorned by Poussin and Le Brun; Le Nôtre laid out his gardens; Corneille and Racine wrote his tragedies; Moliere his comedies; Boileau was his poet; Bossuet, Fenelon, Bourdaloue, and Massillon, were his preachers. It is in the august assembly of men, whose fame can never die, that this monarch whom they

acknowledged as their patron and protector, presents himself to the admiration of posterity." Mr. Macaulay, in one of his critical essays, has attributed the favours which were heaped upon literary men at the close of the seventeenth century, to the example set by the princely Dorset, whose encouragement of literature was again imitated and practised by Montague, Bolingbroke, Harley, and others; but it may well be questioned whether the cosmopolitan liberality promiscuously extended by Louis XIV. to all literary celebrities of whatever nation, was not the original model from whence this generous patronage of men of letters was first copied. From the commencement of his reign, Louis invariably listened with attention to any suggestions of his ministers respecting the elevation or advancement of men of talent. By the advice of Colbert, sixty persons distinguished for their genius and literary accomplishments, were selected to receive pensions from the state. Even foreigners, if conspicuous for their talents or acquirements, were invited to share such rewards and to partake of those courtly honours which were then more highly valued than presents of "silver or fine gold." Vossius, the historiographer of the United Provinces, and Huygens, the celebrated mathematician, each derived resources from the French Court, to assist them in the prosecution of their studies.

The beneficial influence which Louis XIV. exercised in thus promoting the advancement of intellectual civilisation, through his discriminating taste and lavish generosity, has seldom been disputed even by those

writers who regard his public actions with a just and honest indignation. It is impossible to deny him the merit of having fostered and patronised talent; of having raised genius from indigence and obscurity to consideration and respect; of having by his judicious favour encouraged men of ability, whose efforts but for him had been lost to the world, or displayed in vain. Every man of letters ought to have a kindly feeling of respect for the name of Louis XIV. Never did a prince so high in rank show such deference and condescension to men of real genius, or lend his aid with such delicacy to succour them in adversity and misfortune. Egotism and the love of praise might have had some influence in inducing him to seek those who could gratify such passions, yet occasions often happened which show him rising far above these little vanities, and expressing his opinions with true nobility of mind. Moliere, who had annoyed the courtiers and the nobles, the physicians and the divines, by the freedom of his discursive satire, was exposed to all the malevolent and revengeful animosities of these offended dignitaries. They seized every opportunity to defame his character, and attempted to lower him in the estimation of the king, by casting the darkest imputations upon his conduct. Having ridiculed and stigmatised him as an actor, they openly announced to him that he was unfit for their society, and refused to sit with him at the tables of the palace. Louis saw through the meanness of his courtiers, and determined to rebuke their impertinent presumption by vindicating the cause of Moliere. He ordered the poet to be

seated at his breakfast table, and just at the moment when the doors were thrown open and the most distinguished persons of the court began to enter, he handed him the wing of a fowl. "You see me," said the king, "employed in giving Moliere his breakfast, since my people do not find him good enough company for themselves." This lesson had the desired effect—every one hastened to do honour to Moliere. If Louis XIV. felt gratified in receiving flattery, he also knew how to bestow it upon others. No one could excel him in the gracefulness of his manner, or the elegance of his praise, when he desired to pass an encomium upon merit, or to do honour to men of genius. Boileau, on being introduced at court, was asked to recite his favourite passage in the *Lutrin*. The poet with some tact recited the lines which eulogise the exploits of the monarch. When he had concluded the king observed to him, "This is indeed beautiful, and I would praise you more had you praised me less." As Masillon justly remarks, he possessed "*un art d'aissaisonner les graces qui touchoit plus que les graces mêmes: une politesse de discours qui trouvoit toujours à placer ce qu'on aimoit le plus à entendre.*"

In an age when distinguished hereditary descent was considered almost the only passport which could attract the notice of royal grandeur; when the fashions and prejudices of a court were likely to close the palace gates of kingly favour against all who sprang from humble birth or ignoble origin, it is no slight testimony to the good sense of Louis XIV., that he broke through these senseless restrictions of etiquette, and admitted the

actor and the poet, the painter and the wit, to enjoy his most familiar intercourse, and share the pleasures of that refined and elegant society by which he was constantly surrounded. No one could excel him in the art of dispensing favours, or of evincing those little marks of esteem which form the most delicate method of conveying praise; and if we could but forget his errors as a ruler, and regard him only as the friend and protector of the literary circle he loved to assemble at his court, he might well be compared to that Augustus whom a Mæcenas felt proud to serve, and a Horace loved to praise. Never was man more inconsistent in his actions than Louis XIV., never was the chameleon colour of a mind more variably displayed. Like Cecrops, he was half man and half serpent. Sometimes he performed actions worthy of a god, sometimes he committed crimes that stain the very name of humanity. As we see him one hour giving Villars the last order to ravage the Palatinate, and the next in familiar conversation with Racine about the drama for the evening's entertainment; as we see him one hour dictating to Louvois the final word that would lay cities level with the ground, and the next sitting in the alcove at Marly with Boileau, to compare the rival merits of Corneille and Racine; as we see him one hour at the bidding of a Jesuit sign the fatal edict which would half depopulate the valleys of Languedoc, and the next affected even to tears by the touching eloquence of Massillon, or the sublime fervour of Bourdaloue, we wonder that so much of good and evil could be mingled in one nature, that so much

cruelty and hard-heartedness, so much sensibility and tenderness could dwell in one heart, and form attributes of one and the same being.

Although the administration of Louis XIV. was eminently distinguished by the happy influence it exercised in promoting intellectual civilisation, yet the improvement was principally, if not wholly confined to the aristocratic classes of society. The orb itself displayed an intense brilliancy, but no general or well-diffused light was produced by its splendour; for, notwithstanding the genius and erudition that flourished within the precincts of the court, the minds of the people at large remained lamentably uncultured and neglected. The term aristocracy then comprehended the better part of French society, since, beyond the privileged classes of society, few persons were sufficiently educated to form accurate opinions upon literary productions, or works of art. Indeed, at scarcely any previous period had the condition of the bourgeoisie been more depressed; commerce was injured by the foreign wars; internal trade by the religious persecutions; while the excessive taxation required to meet the demands of the state, prevented the merchants from accumulating wealth, or vieing in style with their aristocratic superiors. Moreover, by a system of politic patronage, men of letters were especially enlisted in the service of the crown, instead of being left to make common cause with malcontents and foes. Thus everything harmonised with the spirit of absolutism, and pure royalty as yet encountered no serious opposition to mar its splendid and apparently triumphant career.

A HISTORY OF

THE THREE REVOLUTIONS OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE purpose of the following pages is to enquire into the origin, and to record the results of the Three Revolutions of France.

Whoever has investigated the history of France, must be surprised to observe in how insignificant a light the great mass of the French people had been viewed by their political rulers, prior to the reign of Louis the Sixteenth. Sometimes oppressed by the Church, sometimes by the nobles, sometimes by the monarch, their existence was reduced to serfdom of a most abject and humiliating character. If they had established rights, they dared not maintain them; if they had acquired privileges, they feared to exert them; and in proportion as the fetters of despotism were more heavily imposed, their humility in submitting to the punishment appeared to increase. Surrounded and guarded by its powerful masters, the nation seemed destined to wear the chains of an eternal slavery, and to endure the hardships of a perpetual bondage. The hour of reaction, so long delayed, at

length arrived ; and in the chaotic revolutions, the anarchical tumults, and the violent political changes, which France has witnessed in her government, during the last sixty years, we behold the rebound to centuries of oppression, of degradation, and of wrong.

To obtain comprehensive and accurate ideas concerning that portion of French history subsequent to the revolutionary epoch of 1789, a careful analysis of the different political institutions, which existed in the nation prior to that memorable era, is absolutely indispensable. We shall, therefore, review the French Constitution from its origin, pointing out, as we proceed, the various circumstances which have impeded the progress of civilization, and rendered the government of France peculiarly difficult. We shall especially investigate those remarkable events, which tended to destroy the germs of a free government in France ; lastly, we shall endeavour to show, that true liberty is a blessing to be obtained, rather by enlarging and improving ancient institutions, than by promulgating charters written with the blood of civil discord, and consecrated amidst the smouldering anarchy of war and revolution. To speak figuratively, we must ascend the mountain and search for the avalanche, before we shall be able to account for the torrent flood, which has borne such havoc and devastation through the vale.

Every one knows how Brennus led the inhabitants of Gaul into Italy, and pillaged Rome ; how Gaul herself was overrun and subjugated by the invincible legions of Cæsar ; how she became one of the most

fertile and productive dependencies of the empire ; how her warlike youth, enlisted under the same banner, emulated the courage and the discipline of the Roman veterans ; how her scholars crossed the Alps to rival their conquerors in the pursuits of literature and the arts ; how in the Senate and the Capitol, the voice of her genius was heard, and the triumph of her intellectuality acknowledged ; and how, even in the noon-day meridian of the empire, she furnished, perhaps, the wisest magistrate that ever assumed to wear the Imperial Purple.

The fourth century witnessed the first irruption of the northern nations upon the frontiers of the Empire. Before the conclusion of the fifth, the Goths were established in Italy, the Huns in Parmonia, the Visigoths in Spain, the Alani in Southern Gaul, and the Vandals in Africa. Rome, no longer capable of resisting the impetuous torrent of the northern barbarian, beheld her power broken into fragments by the shock ; and that name, which for centuries had kept the world in awe, hastened to become but a tradition of the past.

Upon the decline of the Empire, Gaul, like other dependent provinces, became gradually alienated from the imperial sway. At the conclusion of the fifth century, the migration of the Nomadic nations was rapidly proceeding. The barbarian tribes of Northern Germany had then furnished from their illimitable forests those warlike bands, which spreading over the fertile plains of Southern Europe were universally establishing the dominion of their martial chiefs upon

the Gallo-Roman soil. After numerous partial incursions, and predatory invasions, the Burgundians, the Visigoths, and the Franks, accomplished the formation of permanent settlements in Gaul; each of these Nomadic tribes maintaining separate territories, which assumed the character of independent colonies. The Burgundians obtained the country eastward of the Rhone; the Visigoths established themselves between the Loire and the Pyrenees; whilst the Franks, advancing from the German border, settled upon that central territory which lies enclosed between the Loire, the Scheldt, and the Rhine. A portion of Brittany and Western Normandy, known as the Armorican Republic, still remained independent of the Frankish conquerors. Lyons formed the capital of the Burgundians; Toulouse that of the Visigoths. Soissons and Paris were the chief cities of the Franks. The Burgundians and the Visigoths, from their close vicinity to the Roman population of Italy and Southern Gaul, imitated the manners and acquired the habits of that refined people; hence they were far more advanced in civilization than the uncultured Frank, who still evinced the primeval ignorance, and adhered to the revolting customs of his pastoral or migratory life. In religious faith there existed also a marked distinction between the different invading tribes. Converted to Christianity by the disciples of Arius, the Burgundians and the Visigoths proved at first more acceptable conquerors to the civilized inhabitants of Gaul, than did their rivals, the Pagan Franks, who, at the period of invasion, practised the rites of a religion founded

upon polytheism and idolatry—a religion which even Tacitus and Ennodius admit required the frequent sacrifice of human victims to appease the anger of its mythic and imaginary deities.

To Clovis, king of the Salian Franks, belongs the merit of founding the French Monarchy. Having in the year 486, defeated the Roman governor Syagrius, at the battle of Soissons, his victorious arms were speedily turned against the Swabians and the Visigoths with equal success. Gaul became overrun by the Frankish followers of Clovis; and the conversion of this able prince to Christianity, seconded by his splendid victories in the field, not only established the Merovingian dynasty securely upon the throne, but brought almost the whole territory of Roman Gaul in subjection to the house of Meroveus. Although the triumph of the Franks appeared complete and final, yet a certain respectful deference was always paid by Clovis to the rulers of the Eastern Empire during the remainder of his reign. From the Emperor Anastasius he condescended to accept the title and dignity of Consul, but this badge of nominal dependency soon ceased to be an object of ambition with his less politic successors; and Justinian was compelled, shortly after the death of Clovis, to renounce all rights of empire over the Roman territory in Gaul. Perhaps, this connection with the empire was sanctioned by the Frankish chief, to obtain advantages over rival invaders; perhaps, to ingratiate his barbarian followers with the Roman population of Gaul, by preserving an apparent continuation of the original government. Wherever

the Teutonic nations established themselves upon the ruins of the Western Empire, they appear to have been solicitous to effect an amicable incorporation with the conquered Romans; finding themselves placed in the presence of a society far superior to their own, as regards civilization and intelligence, they not only attempted to preserve many of its civil institutions, but even appointed Romans to fill the chief offices of administration in preference to their own leaders. Odoacer himself, in Italy, had imagined his dignity increased by accepting the title of Patrician. But the most important link in the chain, destined to unite the Roman population of Gaul to their Frankish masters, was the Christian church; for although the barbarian victors still immolated human beings, as a propitiatory sacrifice to their tutelary deity Odin, and knelt to worship the wooden idols, Crodus and Zernebogus, their faith in these mystical divinities was neither deeply rooted nor profound. The splendid ceremonies and the solemn rites, performed by the clergy of the Romish faith, must have necessarily produced an imposing effect upon a people prone to superstition from their ignorance, and inclined to fanaticism from their character and temper. Such, indeed, was the fact, and the warlike Frank, converted to Christianity, became in the hands of the orthodox church a formidable weapon to be used, both against the heretic and the infidel.

At the period of the Frankish invasion, the only political institution in Gaul capable of preserving society from utter dissolution, was the Christian

church. This hierarchical organization of the clergy had then attained a perfect independence; it elected members without consulting the people; it possessed revenues uncontrolled by the laity; it divided its own magistrates into different ranks and orders, such as bishops, priests, and deacons; lastly, it assumed a political importance, by the regular and frequent assembly of its ecclesiastical councils. As municipalism had been the characteristic feature of the ancient Roman society, so it continued to be that of Gaul long after the dismemberment of the empire. All political influence and authority resided within the walls of the city or town; and whatever class of magistracy presided over and superintended the government of the municipalities, might be considered as possessing the predominant power. The bishops and superior clergy rendered active, as well as ambitious, by their connection with the ecclesiastical corporation of the Church, aspired to govern the urban municipality also; they obtained their desire, and owing to their spiritual authority over the people, as well as their superior intelligence, the only political influence then existing naturally passed into their hands. Even in the rudest ages of society, intellectual power is enabled to obtain a marked superiority over the barbarian hand of force, and such was eminently the fact, in the collision which occurred between the untutored Frank and the civilized Roman. Struck with the universal respect and reverence paid to the priesthood of the Roman church, the fierce invaders participated in the sentiment; they solicited the assistance of

the clergy, and, having appointed the bishops as counsellors, listened with deference and submission to their advice. Thus originated a bond of union between the two races; thus did the Christian church form that frail and slender bridge, which enabled civilization to cross the dark and fathomless abyss of the barbarian epoch.

The Burgundians and the Visigoths, although Christians, were still attached to the tenets of the Arian faith; the clergy of the ancient Roman society in Gaul professed the principles of a more orthodox creed; hence, the latter, having converted the Franks from Paganism to Christianity, encouraged that martial tribe to undertake a war of Proselytism against all races which still adhered to the heresy of the Arian doctrine. As Bertha, the Queen of Ethelbert, by her example, induced that prince to permit the introduction of Christianity upon the Anglo-Saxon soil of Britain; so Clotilda, the Queen of Clovis, having been converted from Arianism by the Roman clergy, exerted her influence successfully, in persuading her pagan husband to adopt the Catholic faith. In an engagement with the Alemanni upon the banks of the Rhine, at Tolbiac, near Cologne, Clovis finding himself upon the point of being defeated, invoked the God of Clotilda, to assist him in turning the fortunes of the day. Inspired with renewed confidence, the energy and valour of the Frankish king, restored the battle; the Franks again advanced, and leaving the King of the Alemanni slain upon the field, completely destroyed the flower of the Swabian force. Flushed with their

success in the splendid victory of Tolbiac, Clovis, and three thousand of his fellow-warriors, entered the cathedral of Rheims and received the rite of baptism from the hands of Remigius, the bishop of that diocese. Henceforth, the cross became their symbol, and thousands of proselytes, enlisted under the holy banner, produced an army formidable from its numerical strength, as well as from the ambitious character of its chief. A certain degree of toleration had been uniformly observed by the Arian clergy in the dominions of the Visigoths and Burgundians, even from the commencement of their ministry; the clergy of the Catholic faith, on the contrary, entertained a deadly animosity against all who supported the Arian heresy. Clovis, perpetually exhorted by the Catholic priesthood to exterminate their heretical adversaries, proceeded to attack the Visigoths, and having signally defeated Alaric, their king, at Vouglè, near Poitiers, the whole Visigoth territory in Gaul, except the province of Septimania, became indisputably added to the Frankish kingdom. The sixth century witnessed the final triumph of the Franks over their rival competitors. The Armoricans, through the influence of their bishops, quietly submitted to the rule of Clovis; the Burgundians, after a severe contest with his successors, shared the fate of the Visigoths. Gaul became France. Two races alone remained upon the soil, the Franks and the original Roman population—in other words, the conquerors and the conquered.

Even at this early period of her history, France

appeared destined to become the great centre of European civilization. Her geographical position favoured communication with surrounding nations; her coasts invited the establishment of a maritime commerce; her climate was temperate; her soil fertile; while upon her plains races were mingling to produce a population, whose descendants, in modern times, have shown that it is possible to combine in one people the graceful elegance of Greece, with the warlike energy of Rome. Emulated by the chivalric prowess of the Saracen, instructed by the inventive genius of the Arab, refined by the classic taste of the Italian, the Franks soon acquired that nobility of character, which for twelve centuries has placed them in the van of civilization and of progress; which has rendered their country a centre of intellectuality, upon whose axis the whole mechanism of European society may be said without exaggeration to revolve.

The monarchy of France resembled many of the other Gothic sovereignties of Europe, as regards its origin and early developement. Warlike in its character, and imperial in its policy, the Teutonic edifice slowly arose amidst the broken ruins of the Empire; deriving solidity of structure from the energetic barbarism of the North, and gracefulness of design from the more refined civilization of the South. Tempestuous and clouded as might appear the opening dawn of its career, a splendid meridian of noontide power, full of grandeur and magnificence, was reserved to grace its future progress. Other

monarchies might be destined to produce abler princes, more exalted philosophers; but none were to excel that of France, in the chivalrous bravery of her kings, the unspotted honour of her nobles, and the unswerving loyalty of her people. With the reign of Clovis the history of France may be said strictly speaking to commence; for although Pharamond, Chlodion, and Meroveus, are recorded as having in the fifth century ruled portions of territory upon the Gallo-Roman soil, under the title of Kings of France, the reigns of these princes are far too fabulous and mythic in their character, to merit observation.

A.D. 486—752. The Merovingian dynasty, or First Race of French Kings, occupied the throne for nearly three centuries; an era replete with all those evils and calamities ever attendant upon a society in its primitive state of developement. The French constitution, under the early Merovingian sovereigns, appears to have been essentially democratic in its character; but when the monarchs of the First Race became perfectly contemptible and insignificant from their degeneracy, the rudiments of that peculiar polity, termed the Feudal System, were gradually introduced into the government. Before proceeding, however, to investigate the constitutional history of the Merovingian epoch, it will be necessary to point out the essential distinctions which existed between the Frankish and the Roman sections of the population. At the period of invasion, the barbarian soldiery, wherever established, claimed by the rights of conquest a considerable proportion of the conquered territory as

their share of victory. The Burgundians and the Visigoths are recorded as having demanded two-thirds of the landed property in each settlement they acquired. The Franks, who resorted to the custom of partitioning the spoils of conquest by military allotment, probably required a similar concession. Thus, nearly the whole of the territorial property of the Gauls became transferred to the invaders, who employed the inferior Roman population to cultivate their lands, and compelled the original proprietors to take refuge in the towns. In some instances, the Romans were still permitted to retain possession of their estates, by paying considerable tributes to their Frankish masters, in the shape of corn, or other agricultural produce; but such examples of lenity were rare. Property acquired by the invaders in this manner was designated as allodial or free; and might be transmitted to children, or other descendants without question or dispute. Owing to this peculiar territorial distribution, the line between the two races became marked and well defined: the conqueror proved his superiority over the conquered—the Frank was above the Roman.

Nor was the disparity less conspicuous in other points of view; for although the juridical system of the ancient Roman society far excelled those rude and barbaric customs, which the illiterate Franks had transplanted from their forest homes in Germany, yet, the latter race ever remained reluctant to abandon their Salic and Ripuarian codes, for the more refined jurisprudence of Theodosius. The Frank always retained the Roman in a state of political subjection,

and constantly reminded him of his inferiority, in a most unequivocal manner. Thus, in cases of homicide, the compensation decreed as due to the relatives of the slain, was determined according to the rank and race of the victim; for the life of a Roman, the fine was limited to one hundred *solidi*; for that of a Frank, it extended to two hundred; admissions which go far to prove the presumed superiority of the one race over the other. In fiscal taxation, a similar inequality of privileges was observable; the Roman citizen being compelled to contribute regularly to the support of the state, while the Frank, or free proprietor, as he was termed, on the contrary, acknowledged no compulsory tax, but merely paid a free gift or benevolence at his own pleasure. Tacitus remarks the dislike which the barbarians entertained against all forced contributions; customs which, if sanctioned, would have proved repugnant to the personal freedom of their migratory life. "The Germans," says he, "were never degraded by the imposition of taxes." Gregory of Tours also records the fact of a judge, in the reign of Childebert, narrowly escaping with his life, for having ordered taxes to be levied upon several Franks who were *ingenui* or free-born. However, it must be admitted, that the unequal and disproportionate manner in which subsidies were levied upon the two races, appears less harsh from the fact that the Frankish bondman enjoyed no immunity from taxation; and that even the allodial, or free proprietors, performed the greater proportion of the military service required for the public defence, at their own cost.

Various theories have been suggested by different writers, as to the views with which the Roman population regarded the invasion of their Frankish masters. Some following the Abbe du Bos have endeavoured to prove, that the Franks were not only amicably received, but even invited into Gaul by the provincial Romans; others, adopting the opposite opinions of Montesquieu, have been inclined to consider the establishment of the Franks in Gaul, as entirely effected by the hand of conquest. Truth probably lies between the conflicting theories of these distinguished philosophers, who, when engaged in maintaining this controversy, may be compared to the knights in the fable, disputing upon the colours of the black and white shield. Both were attempting to reason from a partial, instead of a complete view of their subject, and hence both, though not entirely in error, arrived at imperfect conclusions. The original settlement of the barbarian invaders in Gaul, was unquestionably effected by the power of the sword; but the harshness, usually attendant upon the military occupation of a country after its conquest, appears in this instance to have been either avoided, or materially mitigated, by several contingent circumstances; and of these the most prominent were the following: First, the utter inability of the Roman inhabitants of Gaul, to maintain an army sufficiently well disciplined to withstand the impetuous assault of the warlike barbarians. Secondly, the slight bond of attachment remaining between the provincial Romans of Gaul and the Empire, owing to the excessive tax-

ation consequent upon the ruinous misgovernment of the Imperial Pro-consuls. Thirdly, the peaceable manner in which the Romans submitted to their Frankish yoke, without attempting to revolt. Fourthly, the permission granted to the Romans, either to become naturalized as Franks, or to retain their own civil institutions and laws. Fifthly, the connecting link formed between the two races, by the Franks accepting the services of the Roman bishops, and soliciting them to hold the chief offices of state. Sixthly, the Franks having become, to a certain extent, isolated from each other as proprietors of land, could no longer unite readily to pillage and oppress the Romans. Seventhly, the barbarians when settled in the rich provinces of Gaul began to cultivate the land, instead of depending for subsistence upon their flocks and herds alone; hence, they gradually laid aside the irregular habits of the warfaring life, to adopt the more peaceable occupations of agriculture and commerce. From such facts, evidence may be fairly deduced to prove that the settlement of the barbarians was neither entirely accomplished by aggressive force, nor entirely the result of a peaceable colonization; in truth, after the Franks had taken the initiative, by seizing the lands of the Romans, as the rights of conquest, it would appear that a mutual compromise placed the two races in pacific opposition to each other; and although the advantage evidently lay with the Frank, yet the Roman beheld his master with feelings very different from those which the rebellious Saxons of Britain entertained upon a similar occasion towards their relentless ruler, the Norman conqueror.


Under the Merovingian monarchs, the prerogatives of royalty were exceedingly limited; the kings possessing neither the privilege of making new laws, nor of altering those already enacted. Instead of the sovereign wielding absolute power, the whole authority of the state emanated from annual assemblies of the allodial proprietors, held upon the Champs de Mars. These Parlemens, or convocations of the freemen, were originally held in the month of March; but, probably, as the number of free proprietors increased, the month of May was substituted, in order to facilitate the supply of forage for the cavalry—hence, their title became altered to that of Champs de Mai. In these regular conventions of the people, new laws were ordained, grievances redressed, judgments decided, and the free gifts contributed for the royal revenues and other purposes. Here also the concurrence of all freemen was required, before wars could be declared, or the necessary subsidies levied for their prosecution. Even the sovereign himself was compelled to obtain the full consent of these national assemblies, before he could be said to reign; and no subject, however powerful, dared refuse to acknowledge the supreme jurisdiction of these courts in all cases of judicial appeal. The exact customs of these rude Parliaments of the barbarian epoch, necessarily remain veiled in much obscurity; but, probably like the Witteganote of the Saxon kings, the more intelligent members of the community possessed far greater influence in such assemblies, than is usually ascribed to them; of the

narrow boundaries to which the authority of the monarch was restricted, when he presided over this democratic assemblage of his subjects, we have direct evidence: thus, Chlotaire II., referring to the Parlemens, observes, "They are called that whatever relates to the common safety, may be considered and resolved by common deliberation; and whatever they determine, to that will I conform." The statutes also were addressed to the people in the name of these assemblies, and not in that of the sovereign, since the Franks always remained exceedingly tenacious of that licentious military freedom in legislation, to which they had been accustomed, amidst the forest wilds of Germany. The democratic spirit of the Salic and Ripuarian laws was transferred from the Rhine to the Seine. The Frank regarded his sovereign almost as an equal, and the Merovingian monarchs seem little else than the chieftains of a particular family, possessing the nominal authority of royalty, and enthroned upon the shields of a military democracy. From the reign of Clovis to the period when the beneficiary estates became converted into hereditary possessions, the assemblies of the Champs de Mars formed the principal and regulating power of the state; but the complete establishment of the seignories, under the latter Merovingians, rendered the decadence of these national conventions both rapid and irremediable. After the middle of the seventh century, they seem to have fallen into oblivion and disuse, until their importance was partially restored by the early Carlovingians.

The barbarian royalty of the First Race appears to have been essentially elective in its character ; although candidates aspiring to the throne, when vacant by the demise of the reigning monarch, were strictly limited to the long-haired descendants of Clovis. The king was a chief of the Merovingian family, chosen by the suffrage of a majority of the allodial proprietors in the Champs de Mars ; if unanimously elected, his elevation to the throne was unattended with violence or tumult ; but if the minority supporting a rival chief were numerous and factious, civil wars continued until the survivor of these sanguinary feuds obtained the sovereignty. By the Salic laws of inheritance all landed estates upon the decease of the proprietor, were equally allotted to his male children ; but in default of such issue, the property passed into the hands of the nearest surviving male heir. As all lands subject to the jurisdiction of these peculiar laws were not required to contribute any pecuniary aids for the support of the state, except the military service of their proprietors in the field, an obvious reason is afforded for the strict exclusion of females from the inheritance of this particular species of property. To the eyes of those accustomed to witness daily this Salic subdivision of landed inheritances, the crown appeared as a large estate, subject to a similar partition upon the demise of its possessor ; hence, the laws regulating the regal succession in Merovingian royalty probably originated from this source.

In a state of society so rude and uncivilized as the

period occupied by the rule of the Merovingian dynasty, such ill defined and irregular laws, relating to the transmission of the crown, naturally led to the frequent occurrence of anarchy and disorder. Upon more than one occasion France became divided and perfectly partitioned into several kingdoms, occupied by rival sovereigns. From the sixth to the eighth century, Austrasia, or Eastern France, and Neustria, or Western France, were sometimes entirely distinct kingdoms; and sometimes united under a single monarch. Upon the external frontiers of these sovereignties an incessant warfare existed to repel the formidable invasions of the Saxon, the Frison, and the Bavarian; while their internal boundaries were barriers, perpetually passed and repassed as the fluctuating events of the battle field favoured an advance, or demanded a retreat. Perhaps this irregular character of the limits of the Frankish monarchy partly originated also, in the first attempts which royalty made to influence the popular election of the Franks, by introducing the principle of legitimacy, in reference to priority of birth, when the throne became vacant; and since every disputed point in such rude ages of society was settled by the arbitration of the sword, the monarchy acquired, or lost, its unity of territorial dominion, in proportion to the martial superiority or equality of the rival claimants. Whether from this cause or from less extenuating circumstances, the boundaries of the monarchy were perpetually changing; the territories of the partitioned states increasing or diminishing, as the character of their



rulers happened to be pacific or warlike, indolent or energetic. Nothing can exceed the deplorable condition to which France was reduced, when her soil became the theatre of these vindictive contests for power; the very bonds of human nature seemed torn asunder, and man, degraded to the level of the brute, was hardly to be distinguished from the savage beasts that roamed the forest for their accustomed prey; pillage and rapine, massacre and murder, appeared venial and familiar crimes—even fratricide itself was excused, if the atrocious deed left the assassin in secure possession of the dominion coveted by his guilty ambition.

Amidst the deluge of barbarism, which in the fifth century had swept universally over the face of European society, civilization took refuge in the ark of the Christian church; and the relics of profane literature were thus preserved at a period when but for the existence and predominance of an intellectual priesthood, these precious memorials of ancient learning must have inevitably perished. Absorbed in the vulgar pleasures of sensual pursuits, or engaged in the more exciting adventures of military enterprise, the great mass of the Frankish population passed their lives in utter ignorance of all intellectual science. To the Christian clergy belongs the merit of having watched over and fed the expiring lamp of knowledge. In the silent monastery and the cloistered cathedral that dim and feeble flame was preserved, which has since shed such a brilliant ray over the history of ancient times, which even now, after an age of centu-

ries, casts back its resplendent beam upon the Pyramids of Cheops, the Parthenon of Pericles, and the Coliseum of Vespasian. If the erudition displayed by the church in these dark ages of society deserve honorable mention, not less praiseworthy was the manner in which by oral teaching the clergy endeavoured to humanize the savage dispositions of the barbarian invaders. The practical Christianity of the bishop, St. Cesaire, the inspired eloquence of the enthusiastic missionary, St. Columban, and the liberal philosophy of the ecclesiastical historian, Gregory of Tours, yet remain visible in imperishable records, to teach us how essential to the future welfare of civilization was the priesthood of the Christian church in the Merovingian epoch. But not to the limited circles of intellectual progress were the efforts of the clergy alone confined. Under the sacred shelter of monastic life, they advanced material civilization with an equal vigour. Within and around the monastery all was activity, energy, and life; lands hitherto barren were drained and rendered fertile; plains were reclaimed from the encroaching wastes; vineyards were planted; herds of cattle sent to graze upon the mountain steep; and cornfields harvested along the vale. In the workshop and the forge, the busy hum of labour might be heard; in the forest, the axe resounded with a pleasant echo; in the field, the reaper plied the sickle, and the carter drove his oxen team, until the vesper chime of the convent bell called home the scattered colony to the hour of prayer and repose. Even the wild and lawless hordes of the barbarian soldiery, as they swept

along in their march of reckless devastation, gazed upon these secluded communities with respect, and forbore to pillage or destroy. Agriculture and science, literature and the arts, all alike came within the province of the active Benedictine, whose useful life afforded a happy contrast to the contemplative asceticism and the indolent torpidity of Syrian monachism.

To analyze the different reigns of the First Race of Kings, by placing them in chronological arrangement, would be a useless and unprofitable task ; to record their crimes and atrocities a revolting one. As Milton justly remarked of a similar period in English history, "we may regard their battles and murders, their assassinations and massacres, with as much indifference as the quarrels of kites, and the flight of crows." Unquestionably, some of the early Merovingian monarchs displayed considerable courage in the field when called upon to repel the aggressions of invading foes ; but in the seventh century their character had so degenerated, that they became little else than insignificant princes bearing the nominal titles of sovereignty, without a shadow of its authority. Two queens of the Merovingian monarchs retain an unenviable notoriety—the criminal excesses of Fredegonde, the wife of Chilperic, and the cruel punishment of Brunehaut, after her defeat by the Austrasian nobles, stand out in bold relief amidst the general obscurity of the epoch. The reigns of Chlothaire II. and his son Dagobert, the founder of St. Denys, mark the turning point from whence the dynasty rapidly entered upon its declining course. Prince after prince then

betrayed the feeble intellect and the sickly frame, so characteristic of the race—each inheritor of the throne appearing more nerveless and incompetent than his predecessor. But it was reserved for the last half century of the Merovingian epoch, to produce those drivelling idiots, known in history as the *insensati*; alike contemptible and insignificant, these *faineant*, or sluggard kings, retained only the mock pageantries of royalty, while their chief ministers, the Mayors of the Palace, exercised all the real powers and functions of sovereignty. Eginhard, in describing one of these phantoms of royalty, says, “Nothing was left to the king, except that content with the royal title he should with long hair and beard sit on a throne, receive ambassadors, and repeat to them the answers which he had been instructed, or perhaps commanded to deliver; his subsistence was furnished to him at the discretion of the prefect of the palace; nor had he any possessions, except one villa of very small value; and in his progress to the palace and to the annual assembly, he was drawn by oxen driven by herdsmen.”

The primary cause of this decline and degradation of Merovingian royalty may be traced to the rise of a privileged and powerful nobility. During the intervals which elapsed between the annual assemblies of the Champs de Mars, it was customary for the monarchs, accompanied by their household officers, to hold councils in the palace for the civil administration of the state. The counts, or provincial governors, appointed by the allodial proprietors at

the Champs de Mars, to rule counties or distant provinces, attended these Royal Councils at stated periods, to receive instructions with reference to the local governments. According to the extent of their territorial jurisdiction, and the importance of their services, these officers of the crown received various titles of rank, thus forming a class distinctly raised in estimation and dignity far above the common level of the free proprietors. The bishops, as well as many of the household officers of the palace, participated in these honours by receiving similar marks of royal approbation. Under the general signification of vassals or servants of the crown, were included all these favoured courtiers and flatterers of the Merovingian monarchs; but various titles, such as the Antrustiones, the Fideles, and the Leudes, designated the particular rank of nobility in which each of these supporters of royalty were enrolled. When the Frankish kings first established themselves in the provinces of the Roman empire, they considered the gift of a horse, a battle axe, or a sword, a sufficient recompense for their most faithful follower; but in the seventh century it became a practice with the Merovingian princes, to confer upon their provincial governors grants of land, derived from the fiscal domains of the crown, as rewards for the energy and zeal shown in their administration. In return for these benefices, as such territorial cessions were denominated, the acceptors took an oath of fidelity to the sovereign, and bound themselves to perform a certain amount of military service whenever summoned

by him to the field. The exact terms upon which these peculiar estates were held has occasioned much controversy, but the majority of publicists conclude, that such territorial gifts were only revocable and resumable by the sovereign when some actual delinquency could be proved against the vassal, which disqualified his tenure; that they were subsequently granted for the life of the possessor, and that under the anarchy and declining power of the latter Merovingians, by far the larger proportion of them became converted into hereditary and inalienable possessions. Whatever may have been the particular laws which regulated the tenure of these beneficiary estates, their proprietors soon proclaimed a dangerous independence, alike prejudicial to royalty and to the public power of the state. They rendered themselves independent of the Champs de Mars, held by the allodial proprietors; they aspired to supersede the ordinary tribunals of justice, by establishing manorial law courts of their own; and in proportion as their seigneurial privileges extended, the jurisdictions of the provincial governors became gradually curtailed and reduced almost to insignificance. They made war upon their more defenceless neighbours; and, assuming a right of dominion over all the animals inhabiting the forests of their domains, they inflicted harsher punishments for offences committed against their sacred privileges of the chase, than for crimes which involved the murder of a fellow-citizen. Even when called into the field by the duke of the county to serve the crown, they either obeyed with reluctance or declined attending to

the summons; lastly, uniting together, they usurped the prerogative of electing the Mayors of the Palace—thus destroying the last vestige of power possessed by the unfortunate Merovingians.

The manner in which the beneficiary nobility obtained this predominant ascendancy in the state deserves remark. At the treaty of peace concluded between Gontram and Childebert, at Andely, in the year 587, the leudes extorted from these sovereigns a distinct declaration, that benefices once granted should never be revoked, but remain hereditary in the families then possessing them. When Brunehaut, the widowed queen of Siegebert, found herself placed at the head of affairs, as Regent for her two sons, the heirs to the thrones of Austrasia and Burgundy, she discovered the fatal error which royalty had committed, in fostering and rewarding an aristocracy so powerful and independent as that of the beneficiary proprietors. Endowed with a masculine and enterprising ambition, this daring princess boldly attempted to recover the beneficiary estates from the leudes by declaring the treaty of Andely illegal and invalid; but the Austrasian nobility were not to be so easily defeated, and Brunehaut, after a severe struggle, being placed in their power by the fortunes of war, they submitted her to a most cruel and ignominious punishment. This revolution was the final attempt which the Merovingians made to preserve the traditionary policy of Rome, by endeavouring to maintain an absolute despotism analogous to that of the empire; upon its failure the Germanic element revived, and the government of the

Franks during the remainder of the Merovingian epoch was conducted without reference to any settled laws or established principles. The death of Brunehaut raised the partisans of the treaty of Andely once more to a victorious position; and even Chlotaire II., who had lent himself to aid their inglorious cause, soon felt the weight of their power directed against his own prerogatives. In an important assembly, held by the leudes and bishops, at Paris, in the year 614, this monarch was compelled to give his assent to several ordinances, which reduced the regal authority within very circumscribed limits; and, although the beneficiaries permitted him to choose the Mayor of the Palace, yet the principal power of the state was evidently passing into their hands. Among the numerous restraints which this assembly of the great placed upon royalty, we may especially notice first, that the bishops were henceforth to be elected by the people, instead of being nominated by the sovereign; secondly, that the crown should introduce no fresh forms of taxation in the counties; and, thirdly, that all pecuniary fines which had been imposed on the nation since the death of Siegebert, were to be abolished. From the period marked by these encroaching innovations, royalty and the free proprietors gradually succumbed to the beneficiary aristocracy, whose ambitious leaders, the Mayors of the Palace, usurped the whole power and direction of the state, until the Carolingians established themselves upon the ruins of the Merovingian dynasty. Thus then sprang up the first germs of feudalism; thus originated the

ancestry of that proud nobility, which, despite its errors and its faults, has played so prominent a part in the great drama of modern civilization, which has prevented European society from sinking into the dreary monotony, and the torpid immobility of an Asiatic despotism.

The administrative methods adopted from the *pagi* of the Roman empire for the provincial government of the Frankish dominions, materially contributed to lay the foundations of that territorial independence, which ultimately terminated in the complete establishment of the feudal system. Under Clovis and his successors the Frankish kingdoms were subdivided into counties; each of these partitioned districts being governed by magistrates, termed Counts, whose appointments were originally made at the annual assemblies of the Champs de Mars, and strictly limited to the duration of the year. Where several of these counties happened to be combined under a single ruler, the office was denominated a dukedom, and its possessor enjoyed a higher dignity than that of the ordinary count or *graf*. The duties of the count consisted in presiding over the tribunals of justice, in collecting the royal revenues, and in summoning the free proprietors to the field for military service. When the national assemblies of the Champs de Mars became abandoned, the privilege of appointing these officers was transferred to the crown; and it was at this period that the provincial governors, receiving benefices as rewards for their administrative services, were enabled to commence those insidious encroachments upon the

power of royalty, which virtually produced almost a temporary suspension of that institution. The Frankish kings, with the usual fallibility of mankind, did not rise wholly above the seducing temptations of avarice and gain ; hence, when the crown acquired the privilege of conferring these provincial appointments, it became customary to barter them away in exchange for considerable pecuniary tributes. But while the thoughtless Merovingians engaged themselves in squandering and dissipating the treasures amassed by such a venal traffic, the provincial governors were fortifying their new position, and attaining that formidable independence which dislocated the whole mechanism of the central government. The counts possessing, in many instances, large beneficiary estates, naturally directed their attention to the attainment of local authority, at the expense of the central power of the state ; and having rendered royalty, in some degree, powerless by their bribes, they obtained the object of their ambition. In truth, the decrepit Merovingians appeared destined to behold the very favours they had shown to their followers turned in an evil hour against themselves ; and it might be said of them, as of the dying bird that observed its own plumage upon the fatal arrow,

“ Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel—

He nursed the pinion which impelled the steel.”

Another circumstance which contributed to hasten the humiliation of Merovingian royalty, was the decline of the church in her influence and authority over the state. The seventh century may be regarded

as the midnight of the human mind, as the very nadir of ignorance to which European society has ever yet been doomed to descend. Whatever advance in civilization had been effected by the monastic institutions, whatever degree of order had been introduced into society, by the example of the Gallo-Roman hierarchy, whatever knowledge had been diffused by the erudition and the teaching of the priesthood, all were alike destined to be obscured and hidden awhile beneath the darkened clouds of returning barbarism. For a long period, subsequent to the Frankish invasion of Gaul, the episcopal offices of the church were uniformly filled by ecclesiastics, selected from the Roman section of the population ; but in the seventh century, when the clergy had ceased to elect their bishops, the barbarians, allured by the rich temporalities of the church, rashly undertook to perform the sacred functions of its ministry, without reflecting upon their utter incapacity to fulfil the duties of so holy and so exalted a mission. By this remarkable change in the character of her superior ministers, the Gallo-Frankish church became reduced to a state of chaotic disorganization. Never was ecclesiastical anarchy so universal and so palpable as at the commencement of the eighth century ; councils were then rarely assembled—bishops were chosen upon the most inconsistent principles—illiterate persons were admitted to the priesthood without question or dispute—the laity seized bishoprics to plunder their diocesan temporalities—the bishops oppressed the monasteries—the monks and the clergy were at variance—the services of the

church were neglected—in truth, no administration remained which could be construed into order or regularity, and the ecclesiastical, like the civil government, appeared hastening to the verge of ruin. As the beneficiary aristocracy defied royalty, so did the new episcopacy of the barbarians venture to disregard the authority of the papacy. Rome ceased to possess that influence over the Gallo-Frankish church, which she had hitherto maintained; and, harassed at her own gates by the menacing advances of the Lombard, she approached the Frankish hierarchy rather in the character of a humble supplicant soliciting their aid, than as their spiritual ruler and their guide. The rude transformation which the church had undergone, by the admission of the barbarians to its sacred offices, completely deprived it of that veneration and respect which society had hitherto uniformly paid to the higher orders of its ministry. The aristocratic principle entered into the administration of the church, and effected the same decentralization as in the state. Frankish episcopacy no longer aimed at preserving the unity and central authority of the ecclesiastical corporation, but aspired rather to obtain isolation and independence; the pastor was lost in the proprietor, and the bishops occupied themselves in improving their diocesan lands as usufructuaries, instead of attempting to promote the general interests of the state as members of a Christian hierarchy. Thus did Merovingian royalty lose its principal support; thus did the church, instead of assisting to save the state, only serve to aggravate its disorders and to increase its perils.

Although under the sovereigns of the First Race a very large proportion of the Frankish population were reduced to a state of personal servitude, yet the condition of this inferior class became, in many respects, far more endurable than it had been when subject to the oppressive and vexatious imposts of the imperial despotism. Upon the settlement of the victorious Franks in the Roman lands of Gaul, all the inhabitants of the conquered estates were regarded by their new owners as a portion of their spoil. Each barbarian warrior who seized an estate considered that he possessed an absolute power over the life and property of every individual found upon its soil; and even if he transferred such lands to a fellow-chieftain, the slaves, as the inferior population were termed, passed with the estate to the new possessor. These slaves, or villeins, as they were sometimes designated, enjoyed the right of purchasing and cultivating portions of their master's estate; but they could neither dispose of such lands nor transmit them to their children without his express permission. If they attempted to stray from the estate, the proprietor could reclaim them by law at any time, and in any place; he could also dispose of them without parting with the lands upon which he received them, and from this circumstance, daughters were usually presented at their marriage with a certain number of these domestics, as an appendage to their portions. The general tenour of the legislation and customs of the Merovingian epoch favoured the increase of personal servitude; and since slavery was not then regarded as a badge of degradation, the great

mass of the population readily entered its ranks without scruple or hesitation. In a state of society where violence and passion were seldom efficiently curbed by the salutary restraints of law and justice, the only shelter upon which the weak and the unprotected could rely, was the powerful arm of some martial chief. Hence, numbers willingly relinquished all ideas of personal liberty, to obtain security amidst the chaotic disorders and the terrible anarchy which constantly menaced their existence, or at least exposed them to perpetual danger. In these deplorable periods when contending rivals were almost unceasingly engaged in struggling for the precarious honours of royalty, and thus scattering devastation over the whole Frankish dominion, everything tended to the extinction of that intermediate class of small landed proprietors, which in modern times has formed so efficient a link between the upper and lower strata of society; even the church yielded to the general impulse, and the whole population seemed at last to resolve itself into the widely different denominations of the noble and the slave—the one to govern and protect, the other to serve and to obey. As it was to the interest of all who possessed extensive wealth, or large territorial influence, that the progressive increase of slavery should be encouraged, no opportunities which could expedite this result were permitted to pass unprofitably away. A variety of circumstances contributed to favour the advancement of this peculiar change in the social state. The occasion of famine or scarcity induced numbers to barter away their freedom

in exchange for eleemosynary relief; others were compelled to surrender their liberty, from an inability to pay those exorbitant fines which had been imposed upon them by the barbarian customs for the commission of crime. Neglect in attending the summons of the crown to military service, when proved against the free proprietor, condemned him to the ranks of servitude. Lastly, many devout, or rather superstitious persons, were persuaded to place themselves under the protection of the church, hoping thus to obtain security amidst the perils of so turbulent an age. But whatever were the causes which consigned such multitudes to the bondage of slavery, it is evident that when once individuals had consented to wear the fetters of so burdensome a yoke, their redemption became exceedingly difficult, if not impossible; and, hence, the inferior population slowly but imperceptibly declined into that feeble democracy, which in after times proved so inefficient a check to curb the ambitious pretensions, and restrain the pernicious encroachments of the feudal aristocracy.

One of the most striking features of the French constitution, under the First Race of Kings, was the usurpation of sovereign power by peculiar officers, termed Mayors of the Palace; and as these magistrates by their energy and ambition so completely altered the complexion of the Merovingian epoch, the origin of this office, as well as the political functions appertaining to it, require particular observation. The Major D^omus, or Maire du Palais, originally signified the chief officer of the Palace; and the earliest mention

of such an appointment in the Frankish kingdoms may be traced to the middle of the sixth century. The mayoralty when first established was merely intended as an institution for the domestic government of the palace, the duties of its principal officer being confined, long after its origin, to the superintendence of the royal finances, the regulation of the domestic affairs of the palace, and the presentation of all petitions addressed to the king. Chosen by the sovereign from his leudes, or companions, the mayors naturally devoted their abilities to support the interests of the crown; and being placed, by their official position, in daily and familiar intercourse with the monarch, they insensibly encroached upon the functions of royalty, until one by one every prerogative of the crown became consigned to their discretionary care. Several instances of the mayors having been elected by the leudes may undoubtedly be discovered in the early part of the seventh century; but these occurred chiefly when the heirs of Merovingian royalty happened to be minors, and the mayor, thus chosen, assumed the character of a Regent rather than that of his original office. Sismondi and the Abbe de Mably, from their democratic predilections, have conjectured, that the administration of justice was the principle function of the mayoralty; and that the mayors were officers chosen by the allodial proprietors to counteract that undue influence, which the seigneurial nobility were obtaining by their encroachments in the judicial law courts of the royal jurisdiction. Thus, the former of these writers observes, "Si nous

connâissons un peu mieux la constitution de la monarchie, peut être trouverions nous que le maire, comme le justiza, chez les Arragonnais etait le representant non des grandes mais des hommes libres qu'il etait pris en général dans le seconde classe de la société et qu'il etait chargé de reprimer les usurpations de l'aristocratie bien autant que celles des rois."

To support this hypothesis, the derivation of the term Major Domus is traced to the German *Mord-dom*, a word signifying a death-judge—a judge of murder; and the mayor, thus converted into a national officer of great importance, is supposed to have been furnished with sufficient authority to bring even the most powerful culprits to justice, if they offended against the written laws or established customs of the kingdom. By this conjectural idea of their functions, the mayors are elevated to the high position of having been the champions of the free proprietors, in resisting and preventing the oppressions of the leudes. Few writers, however, can be found to concur with Sismondi in this theory, which is more subtle than conclusive; moreover, historical data are wanting to prove that the mayors were ever distinctly elected by the freemen, or that these officers considered themselves especially appointed to represent the wishes and defend the interests of the allodial proprietor. As Mr. Hallam observes with much force, "In the seventh century the power of the great, and not that of the people, meets us at every turn." The origin of the mayoralty, as deduced from the domestic administration of the palace, is by far

the more probable source from whence the institution takes its rise; the arguments in favour of such a derivation being based upon better established and more authentic evidence than that which supports the speculative suppositions of Sismondi. Among the Germanic nations domestic service was always considered rather in the light of a privilege, and an honorable distinction, than as a mark of inferiority; nobility itself having been originally instituted to distinguish the favourite servants of the chief, or king, from the remaining portion of the warfaring tribe. "Whoever is great in the palace, is great with the people," was almost a proverbial saying with the Franks; and even in the days of modern royalty we may observe faint relics of this domestic servitude of the nobility still nominally preserved. It was the decadence and the degeneracy of the Merovingian race which caused the Mayors of the Palace to assume so prominent a position in the state; the perpetual succession of minors to the throne—of children enervated by debauchery, and rendered contemptible by all the degrading vices of sensuality and intemperance, naturally requiring the constant presence of an able minister to wield the prerogatives of royalty and perform its functions: assuredly, if the descendants of Clovis had proved themselves worthy of their ancestor, the duties of the mayor would have been confined to the domestic services of the palace; but when royalty became effete by passing into the hands of idiots and imbeciles, nothing was left but to supply its vacant place with the most appropriate

substitute. It is true, there was a period when the mayors, having snatched the rod of authority from the pusillanimous Merovingians, aspired to humble and subdue the beneficiaries; but this vain design was soon rendered futile by the preponderance of the nobles and the mayors instead of being allowed to enjoy a tranquil autonomy, were compelled to place themselves at the head of the beneficiary aristocracy, and obey the commands of that influential class.

The conclusion of the reign of Dagobert I., in the year 638, marks the exact point at which the mayors became depositaries of the predominant power in the state. After this period the Merovingian monarchs, either from cowardice or imbecility, declined to lead armies into the field, or to preside in the great courts of justice; and hence, the Mayors of the Palace, from their official vicinity to the throne, were invested with the military command of the nation, and permitted to assume the direction of its judicial administration. But, perhaps, the principal source of that power, which the mayors enjoyed, was derived from the beneficiary estates, the management of which soon passed entirely into their hands—the deplorable fatuity of the Merovingians rendering it necessary for these officers to undertake the superintendence of the fiscal domains of the crown, in common with the other functions of royalty. The territorial possessions of the Merovingian kings were remarkable for their productiveness, as well as for their vast extent—coteremporary historians having recorded that not less than one hundred and sixty of these royal palaces,

with their adjacent farms and orchards, formed the patrimonial inheritance of the First Dynasty, before the benefices had been originally granted to the leudes. The mayors permitted by the crown to dispose of such valuable estates at their own discretion, naturally bestowed them upon favorites or flatterers, and frequently receiving considerable pecuniary bribes from this mercenary traffic, not only amassed unbounded riches, but acquired large territorial possessions also. In a society so little regulated by the controul, either of laws or of public opinion, and in which so much depended upon the presence or absence of military force, wealth too often became synonymous with power. It was not asked, if such and such an individual had a right to commit any particular act of injustice, but whether he was able to do so, whether he could defeat those who maintained opposite opinions; upon the relative martial capabilities of the aggressor, and of those who resisted him, hung the issue of every disputed point; the strife of argument seldom preceded that of the sword, and the battlefield became the tribunal in which a verdict was at once decided by the strongest arm and the swiftest lance. Hence, the Mayors of the Palace, deriving the weapons and the muniments of war from so inexhaustible an armoury as the beneficiary treasury, were placed in a position both formidable and menacing, when compared with that of any antagonist who dared enter the arena to wrest from their hands the supreme power of the state.

Before the various phases which the mayoralty

assumed can be described with precision, it will be necessary to explain the marked disparity that existed between the Franks of Neustria, and the Franks of Austrasia. Neustria, or Western France, more particularly, represented Roman Gaul, retaining something of that splendid civilization, which the Empire left even upon its shattered and crumbling ruins. Austrasia, or Eastern France, represented German Gaul, developing that spirit of military conquest and martial colonization, so peculiarly characteristic of Teutonic barbarism. Neustria aspired to reproduce, to reconstruct that centrality of power, which imperial despotism had enjoyed in the palmy days of its career. Austrasia remained instinctively intent upon preserving the elective principle of the German tribe; the inhabitants of the former were the more attached to the populous municipality of the city—those of the latter, to the isolated castle and the solitary stronghold of the forest; the former felt a pride in tracing back their recollections to the Tiber—the latter to the Rhine; the former delighted in the games of the circus—the latter loved to hazard the more enterprising dangers of the chase; the former were the more erudite and polished—the latter the more warlike and independent; the one showed the depth, the fulness, the fertility of the stream—the other the strength, the sublimity, and the majesty of the torrent. Even from the first incursion of the Barbarians, upon the lands of Gaul, the passage of the German tribes from East to West had been very uniformly maintained. Austrasia, perpetually attacked in her rear by those restless

colonies that inhabited the right bank of the Rhine, was compelled to advance and occupy Neustria. Wave after wave of Austrasian invasion broke upon the diminishing shore of Neustria; and the remnants of Roman civilization fast disappeared under the rapid and sweeping flood of Teutonic conquest. An institution so paramount and so important as that of the mayoralty, could not but be influenced by the diverse character of the Austrasian and the Neustrian society; hence, we find, in each of these rival kingdoms, widely different views were entertained respecting the basis upon which the office should rest—the Neustrians, for the most part, desiring that the mayors should remain dependent upon royalty—the Austrasians, that they should be rendered subservient to the beneficiary aristocracy. In the contest which ensued to decide between these antagonistic principles, Austrasia obtained the mastery. Let us enquire how the victory was accomplished.

Although the Merovingian kings had grown exceedingly contemptible and insignificant, by the middle of the seventh century, yet the mayors continued, in many instances, faithful ministers and active supporters of the crown. Instead of favouring the beneficiary proprietors at the expense of royalty, they pursued an opposite policy; and sending the duke, or count, to govern provinces far away from his own personal estates, they retained him, to a certain degree, in a state of vassalage and dependency. The provincial governor isolated, by this politic measure, from his lands, his companions, and his slaves, instead of rising

to the elevated position of a chief, possessing an almost independent authority, found himself reduced to the condition of a humble and subordinate functionary. This treatment was quickly resented by the beneficiaries, who being united by reciprocal interests, determined to elect their own mayors, instead of permitting royalty to retain the right of nomination to this important office. The mayors concluding that their power would be completely undermined, if such a revolution were effected, urged their partisans and dependents to resist the proposed change. The struggle between these powerful rivals soon came to an issue. At the period of collision the mayoralty of Neustria was held by Ebroin, a leader who had shewn considerable ability in the administration both of civil and military affairs; that of Austrasia had long been occupied by a chief, from the energetic family of the Pepins of Landen: the former represented those partisans who desired that the crown should retain the right of appointing the Mayors of the Palace, or, at least, have the option of rejecting upon disapproval the officer chosen by the Leudes; the latter represented those who wished to transfer the privilege of electing the mayors unconditionally to the beneficiary proprietors. The claims of Ebroin were supported by the inferior orders of the priesthood, and the monastic clergy; those of the Pepins, by the episcopacy of the barbarians, and the aristocracy of Austrasia. Ebroin, as the champion of royalty, defended it in the name of several phantom kings for a considerable period, secure from the menacing encroachments of the beneficiaries;

at the battle of Loixi he obtained a signal victory over his formidable adversaries, the Austrasian nobles, but the hopes arising from such transitory and precarious success were shortly afterwards destroyed by the treacherous assassination of this distinguished leader. Berthaire, who succeeded Ebroin in the Neustrian mayoralty, after the brief intervening rule of Waratro, renewed the contest; but he also, while asserting the rights of Thierri III., perished in defending royalty. Upon the fatal plains of Testry, Neustria sustained her final and irreparable defeat—Pepin D'Heris-680. tal, the mayor, and chosen chief of the Austrasian nobles, having there completely routed and overwhelmed the Neustrian forces of Berthaire, by the martial prowess and superior discipline of Austrasian chivalry. This memorable battle placed Pepin in undisputed possession of the three mayoralties—Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy; and so completely did this victory establish the Austrasian principle of aristocratic election, that Thierri III. was permitted to remain upon the throne, as if no revolutionary change had been effected in the constitution. It signified but little whether a Thierri, or a Dagobert, a Chilperic, or a Childebert, retained the vain and empty titles of an unsubstantial sovereignty, since, like the index hands upon the dial, they but moved in obedience to a hidden spring within. Sovereign and general, arbiter and judge, henceforth the mayors of the palace usurped the throne, and if these magnates deigned to rule in the name of some unhappy prince, it was only to postpone the denouement of their

ambitious designs to a future and more propitious hour. The field of Testry was the grave of the Merovingians—there aristocracy triumphed over royalty—there German-Gaul was victorious over Roman-Gaul; henceforward, the supreme power of the state became vested in the mayors, who were at once the organs and the instruments of the beneficiary nobility. To the silent cell of the convent, to the darkened dungeon of the palace, then passed the fading and the fleeting shadows of the house of Merovève; and if over the obscure and impassive lives of these miserable princes, time has generously cast the favouring veil of oblivion, history should have the forbearance and the lenity not to attempt its removal.

Election was a privilege which the Austrasian Franks had always been remarkably eager to preserve; and since, in such rude ages of society, so much depended upon personal qualifications, the elective principle was adhered to as being the simplest method for selecting the most suitable candidates to fill any office which became vacant. During the fifth and sixth centuries scarcely any appointments were made in the Frankish kingdoms, except by election; the bishops were chosen by the inferior clergy; the generals by the soldiery; the provincial governors by the assemblies of freemen; and even royalty, though limited to a particular family, was compelled to solicit the suffrage of the allodial proprietor. But in the seventh century this free election of the Franks gradually fell into disuse; the national assemblies were then seldom convoked; the bishops owed their

elevation to the favour of the crown, or that of influential laymen; the dukes, or counts, obtained their appointments to the provincial governments from the Mayors of the Palace; the mayors were chosen by the sovereign, or by a few of the most powerful nobles; and even the heirs of royalty, when elevated to the throne, were no longer required to be subjected to the elective ordeal. In truth, every one appears at this period to have been intent upon securing for their immediate posterity any advantages they had acquired, amidst the general anarchy which prevailed. The beneficiary proprietors led the way in developing these views of selfish aggrandisement, by endeavouring to convert the provincial governments into hereditary offices; the Mayors of the Palace observing the success which marked the efforts of the beneficiaries, were not slow in following so seductive an example. Pepin D'Heristal, instructed by the fate of Grimoald, the celebrated Austrasian mayor, who had perished in attempting to depose young Dagobert, the infant son of Siegebert III., hesitated before he entered upon so perilous an enterprise as that of deposing the Merovingians. The more plausible design of making the mayoralty a dignity hereditary in his family, satisfied his ambitious views; and having decided in favour of such a purpose, his whole energies were directed to effect its accomplishment. Pepin possessed many qualifications to aid him in this delicate manœuvre; the great influence he had acquired over the Austrasian Franks, by the skilful policy of his government, as well as by the unvaried success of his military under-

takings, enabling him to propose many innovations which, if advanced from any other quarter, would have been considered futile and chimerical. Having accustomed the Franks to regard the mayoralties in the light of patrimonial estates, he at length declared that he possessed the right to bequeath them by testament to his descendants; and the assertion of this remarkable claim would probably never have been disputed at his death, had not a singular calamity happened to his family. Drogon and Grimoald, the sons of Pepin, both perished by untimely deaths; hence, at the close of his career, this distinguished leader was compelled to consign the mayoralties to his youthful grandson, Theodebald, whom he placed under the protection of Plectrude, his surviving widow. Polygamy being countenanced by the Franks at this period, Pepin had also another mistress, Alpaida, by whom a son was born to him, named Charles. Jealousy naturally sprang up between Plectrude and Alpaida; subsequent events increased it; and the latter, implicated in the plot which destroyed Grimoald, was placed with her son in prison, by Pepin's order, shortly before his own death. When Pepin died, Plectrude discovered the difficulties and responsibilities of her position. Dagobert III., the little Merovingian, counted only three years—Theodebald, the Mayor, six. Thus, one child was to be the guardian and the minister of another. To such a warlike people as the Austrasians, this infantine government appeared ridiculous and inconsistent; moreover, the Neustrians, taking advantage of Pepin's death, attacked and defeated the veteran force which

had hitherto enabled Austrasia to maintain a marked superiority over her neighbouring rival. Humiliated by this reverse the Austrasians looked back upon the past with feelings of regret; those standards they had so often borne to victory reminded them of their ancient pre-eminence, and, wakening up the fiery purpose of revenge, inspired them to regain the laurels they had lost; a leader was alone wanting to restore their fortune, and Charles, surnamed Martel, the natural son of Pepin, by Alpaida, escaping from prison at the time, they offered him the mayoralty and ranged themselves beneath his banner.

At the commencement of the eighth century, political civilization in Frankish Gaul had receded to its lowest ebb. Anarchy and disorder were then, perhaps, more visible and more universal in the Frankish kingdoms, than they had been even at that period when the barbarians first broke through the ill-protected barriers of the empire, and laid the desolating hand of conquest upon her richest provinces. Many circumstances concurred to produce this retrograde movement, but of these, by far the most influential was the marked alteration which had occurred in the character and conduct of the Gallo-Frankish hierarchy. The ministry of the Christian church, profaned and desecrated by the presence of the soldier and the layman, no longer assisted in preserving social order; the papacy ceased to correspond with an episcopacy so fallen and degraded as that of Frankish-Gaul; ecclesiastical councils, which had hitherto tended in some degree to regulate civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs, vanished

from the scene. All dependence of the superior upon the inferior clergy—of the inferior upon the superior, was at an end. The priests neither respected their metropolitan, nor listened to his counsel; and the bishops, assuming the habits, the manners, and the instincts of the territorial proprietor, not only neglected the sacred duties of the sacerdotal office, but even proceeded with armed retinues into the field of battle to violate the rights and privileges of their more peaceful neighbours. Co-existent with this lamentable retrogression in the ecclesiastical society of Frankish-Gaul, was the increasing chaos, which had entered the political government of the state. Nor were other and more pressing difficulties wanting to add to the perplexities of the hour. Innumerable foes menaced the Frankish kingdoms on every frontier of their limits—fresh hordes of barbarians continually assailed Austrasia upon her German flank—the Saxon and the Frison, dashing through the borders of her eastern confine, aspired to re-establish upon her plains the blasphemous idolatries, and the polluting rites of pagan worship. In Aquitaine the ancient Roman population incessantly laboured to regain their former independence; while the Moors, having overthrown the kingdom of the Goths in Spain, planted the crescent upon the walls of Cordova, and threatened to bring southern Gaul within the boundaries of their extending dominion. Never in the world's history did there occur a more momentous pause. The future destinies of civilization hung, as it were, trembling in the balance; and for a brief and gloomy moment, Christian Europe appeared inevitably

doomed either to sink beneath the terrible thralldom of Moslem fanaticism, or to relapse once more into the impious practices, and the monstrous superstitions of Pagan feticism.

The death of Pepin D'Heristal may be said without exaggeration to have occasioned an entire dissolution of Frankish society; whatever regularity, whatever order this able ruler had by dint of genius and perseverance infused into the political government, perished with him; and as the displacement of a single stone is sometimes sufficient to cause the fall of a crumbling edifice, so did the removal of this energetic mind from the state produce its ruin. In the history of Frankish-Gaul it would be difficult to select a period when political society showed less signs of vitality, or appeared less equal to resist the evils which endangered its existence. Established laws were no longer observed—ancient customs were disregarded—the ecclesiastical corporation was a complete wreck—the parlemens of the Champs de Mars ceased to assemble—the territorial proprietors had assumed an independent authority—royalty deposed had become but a nullity—the mayoralty was occupied by a phantom, and the nation placed beyond the pale of public order, by the conflicting passions that were, so to speak, warring within its bosom, soon passed into a state of wide-spread and fearful anarchy. Barbarism, again erect, lifted up its proud and crested head; nothing remained to challenge and confront it; nothing seemed left worthy to be termed its antagonist and rival. When

the progress of social disorganization has arrived at a certain point—when those who possess the right to govern have lost the power to do so, there exists but a single agency capable of restoring order and reproducing stable government. Nothing but the establishment of a military despotism can then repair evils of such magnitude ; and all history is pregnant with innumerable examples of nations wearied by the calamities of civil discord having taken refuge under the protecting wing of martial power. What the Dictators were to ancient Rome—what Thrasybulus was to the Athenians under the anarchical rule of the Thirty Tyrants—what Cromwell was to England in the seventeenth century—what Napoleon was to France in the nineteenth—Charles Martel was to the Franks of the eighth. He appeared upon the political stage with a mind equal to the emergencies of the hour ; he knew the wants and the requirements of the society into which he was thrown ; he intuitively acquired a knowledge of the position he was called to occupy ; and having his purpose once distinctly placed in view, he advanced with unconquerable determination and indomitable energy to its accomplishment. The government which he established partook of a despotic character ; he regarded neither laws nor customs, neither the authority of the church nor the influence of the nobles, but directed the state by his own will ; if he condescended to consult any one, it was the captains of that splendid soldiery which formed the basis and the bulwark of his power. Born to command, to

govern, and to guide, he became the idol of his martial comrades, who, proud in serving under such a leader, inscribed upon his standards those immortal victories which in succeeding ages have lent so bright and imperishable lustre to his name.

Never was the Gallo-Frankish society placed in such imminent danger, as when Charles Martel accepted the Austrasian mayoralty. The Aquitainians and the Neustrians were advancing against him from the south ; the Saracens, bearing the fiery torch of devastation through the cities of Provence and the vineyards of Gascony, had ascended nearly to the Loire ; the Frison and the Saxon were threatening in the rear. But the valour of Austrasian chivalry turned the tide of fortune in favour of the Frankish chieftain. The Neustrians fled precipitately from the reverse of Vinci ; a single battle repelled the Frisons across the Rhine ; and the crescent hosts of Islam, scattered by the terrible day of Tours, repassed the Pyreneean frontier in panic and dismay. The Saxons, however, proved more formidable foes to Charles. Six times he advanced into their country to effect their subjugation—six times he was compelled to retreat before them ; and the conqueror who had repulsed the Arab cavalry of Abderame, found himself embarrassed by a handful of these forest soldiers. If, however, the sword proved inadequate to subdue the barbarian tribes that harassed and infested Austrasia upon her German border, another agency sprang up which promised to be more successful ; and this was the band of humble missionaries sent forth and

supported by Christian Rome. Even from the fifth century one of the chief designs of the papacy had been to effect the conversion of pagan Germany, and bring the savage hordes of that vast wilderness within the pale of Christian civilization ; yet, notwithstanding the uniform zeal displayed by the successive occupants of St. Peter's in this meritorious enterprise, all efforts which they employed for the purpose had met with but faint success. At the commencement of the eighth century the Anglo-Saxon church, that elder daughter of papal Rome, as Michelet has poetically styled her, furnished an enthusiastic and energetic labourer, in every respect adapted to this pious work. Saint Boniface, a monk, from an obscure convent in the west of England, then aspired to be the apostle of Germany ; and placing himself at the head of a few devoted followers, entered upon the perilous enterprise. Inured to the hardships and privations of the wandering life by the austere character of his previous habits, endowed with many of the noblest qualities of the mind, and gifted with an eloquence which carried conviction to the hearer by its evident sincerity, this remarkable man appeared especially designed by nature for so arduous and difficult a task. To the self-reliance of Columbus, he united the energy of Luther and the zeal of Loyola. He believed the doctrines which he preached were founded upon truth ; and faith begets perseverance—for faith is, as it were, a compass to the human mind, when ambition ventures forth upon the boundless ocean of enterprise and discovery. The mission of St. Boniface formed

a link which brought Austrasia in connection with Rome. Supported on the one hand by the whole power of the papacy, and on the other by the influence of the Austrasian mayors, the progress of the saint soon became marked and visible : churches were erected ; congregations formed ; bishoprics founded ; and the number of missionaries increased. Where the might of the warrior had failed, the eloquence of the priest succeeded ; and many a sacred temple showed, by its lofty and aspiring pinnacle, the rapid advance Christian proselytism was making amidst the rude and unlettered population of the German forests. From hence the church of Mentz may be said to date its origin ; from hence Cologne, that Rome of the north, became the spiritual centre of Christian Germany ; then did that brilliant ray of intellectual light, the school of Fulda, first break through the darkness of the West, to herald in the morn of civilization and improvement. Wherever the missionaries succeeded in establishing their spiritual colonies a Christian community arose, with views favourable to the cause of the Austrasian Franks ; and these converts, entering the armies of Charles Martel, tended materially to prevent the lawless aggressions of such tribes as still adhered to paganism ; in a word, the original German population, divided and asperated by the attrition of hostile religious creeds, soon caused the barbarian soldiery of the Rhine to lose that unity and cohesiveness, which had rendered them such formidable neighbours to the Frankish kingdoms. Although Charles Martel

paid but little attention or respect to any communications he received from the Vatican, yet the benefits to be derived from the labours of the missionaries were too palpable and too ostensible for him to treat them with disregard. Hence, we find, that he entered into frequent negotiations with their leaders, and always showed himself eager to advance their interests, as well as promote the objects of their mission. Austrasia was the home of the missionaries; from thither they started—thither they returned; it was to her profit that they went forth; she hived, as it were, the honey of the bee, by turning their spiritual conquests to her own temporal advantage. Thus, by a two-fold policy, by the power of the soldier, and the power of the priest, did Charles Martel consolidate the dominion he had acquired; thus were the first rude foundations laid, upon which the imperial grandeur of the Carlovingian dynasty became subsequently erected; thus were the three mayoralties, Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy, again reunited; and the Frankish kingdoms once more brought in subjection to a single ruler.

Having secured the Gallo-Frankish territory, from the invasions of the barbarian and the infidel, Charles Martel proceeded to frame a military organization for its political government. Aware of the error which the early Merovingians had committed, by conferring the benefices upon their leudes and domestic officers, without establishing definite regulations, respecting the obligation of military service, he adopted a different plan; and instead of permitting the beneficiaries to

offer or withhold military aid at their own discretion, he enforced them to perform stated duties, by fixed and compulsory laws. In the presence of such dangerous rivals as the Saxon and the Saracen, nothing but the regular maintenance of an armed force could ensure permanent safety to the state; and if vast military arrays were not always required to be actually present in the field, it was, at least, absolutely essential that a system should exist by which considerable armies could be placed there with rapidity and precision. Charles Martel was too conscious of the importance of martial power, to neglect any means which tended to maintain the discipline and superiority of the soldiery he had raised. The grants of land he bestowed upon his favourite captains and adherents, were no longer termed benefices, but fiefs; and whoever accepted these territorial presents bound themselves by the most solemn stipulations to perform certain military duties in the field, thereby acknowledging that the grantor retained considerable power over the estate. If the vassals, as the beneficiary proprietors henceforth became designated, refused to comply with such provisions, or, through delinquency, neglected to fulfil these engagements, the fiefs reverted to the donor by escheat; and, without question, in an age when force so often usurped the seat of justice, many instances occurred of an unjust resumption of the fiefs, by those who possessed supreme power in the state. Assuredly, these conditions were very different from the vague and latitudinarian terms upon which benefices had been originally granted by Clovis and

his successors to their leudes—independence being the characteristic of the beneficiary—obedience, that of the vassal. But the essential distinction between a benefice and a fief consisted in this, that the military duties required of those who possessed the former, were owed to the sovereign, or the state; whilst they who possessed the latter, owed fealty to the lord only—the lord might indeed be the sovereign, but it was not as such that the vassal obeyed him. And this fundamental difference between the benefice and the fief, originated in the illegal manner by which Charles Martel had risen to supreme power; for able and invaluable as his services were to the Franks, it cannot be denied but that he was an usurper, rather than a ruler, elevated to authority by legitimate means. Here, then, sprang up the first germs of feudalism, the first rude indications of that peculiar privilege, by which individuals were permitted to raise armed forces independent of the central authority of the state; for although time was required to produce the more mature developement of the feudal institutions, their primary origin may be distinctly traced to the military fiefs which Charles Martel bestowed upon the bold and daring adventurers he so often led to victory, and recompensed with plunder.

Notwithstanding the complete predominance which the Austrasian mayors obtained in the state, Charles Martel had still deemed it advisable to retain one of the Merovingian phantoms upon the throne: this kind of ideal royalty serving to veil many usurpations which, if more openly acknowledged, might have,

perhaps, led to embarrassment. The partition of the Frankish kingdoms at his death, however, displays in vivid colours the absolute character of the } A.D. authority he enjoyed. Having three sons, Carlo- } 741. man, Pepin, and Grifon, he proceeded to divide his dominions between them, assigning to each, as he imagined, a proportional and equitable share. To Carloman he bequeathed Austrasia, Suabia, and Thuringia ; to Pepin, Neustria, Burgundy, and Provence ; to Grifon, a few intervening counties detached from the monarchies of Austrasia and Neustria. No remonstrances were raised on behalf of Merovingian royalty against this arbitrary apportionment, nor did any convention of the allodial, or beneficiary proprietors, assemble to confirm it by their sanction ; so that this important subdivision of the mayoralties was effected without the assent of any constitutional assembly of the nation, and rested entirely upon the assumed prerogative which the Austrasian mayors had recently created, by the incontestible superiority of their martial power. Accustomed to enjoy an almost unlimited authority in the state, Charles deemed it sufficient to ensure the future fulfilment of his testamentary decrees, that a few of the chief vassals and domestic officers of the palace had acquiesced in his views ; but, in a society just emerging from the darkness of anarchy, like that of the Franks at this period, the moment a great mind which has been successful in restoring order disappears, its influence disappears also. The death of Charles Martel exemplified how easily these precarious territorial divisions, established by the testaments

of dying men, could be set aside; for no sooner was this able ruler withdrawn from the world, than his last injunctions were disregarded by the very parties who had sworn to obey them. Pepin and Carloman, having inherited the patrimonial bequests of their father, without experiencing any opposition on the part of the beneficiary aristocracy, proceeded to defraud their younger brother, Grifon, of his legitimate proportion; but the latter, unequal to maintain his rights against so powerful and so unnatural a combination, was defeated in the contest which ensued, and subsequently immured in a convent. At the concluding period of the Merovingian epoch, a passion for the seclusion and the sanctity of monastic life very universally prevailed in Western Europe. Every class of society furnished votaries eager to sacrifice worldly interests, for the prospects of eternal salvation. Kings and rulers, princes and potentates, willingly abdicated the curule chair of authority, and abandoned the throne of temporal power, to enter the gloomy solitudes of the convent; hoping by this spontaneous humiliation, to ensure, as they imagined, the certainty of future happiness in the world to come. As an atonement for the sins of their past lives, it was considered not only necessary that the penitents should surrender all the pomps and luxuries of life, but that they should also proceed to inflict upon themselves the most severe corporeal chastisements imagination can conceive; and if the monkish chroniclers had not related with so much apparent accuracy the wonderful sufferings from pain and self-denial which many of these zealots

endured, reason would hardly credit that any human being could have ever voluntarily submitted to pass through such terrible ordeals. Inspired by the heated and glowing ardour of fanaticism, all worldly considerations appeared to be thrown aside by these enthusiasts; and men who had shewn themselves the most eager to acquire power and dominion, became the first to relinquish them. Either from feelings of remorse, from the impulse of superstition, or from motives of sincere piety, Carloman adopted the prevailing idea, and determined to renounce the vanities and pleasures of the world for the devout contrition and the solitary penance of the cloister. Having resigned the mayoralty of Austrasia to his brother, Pepin le Bref, he hastened to the tomb of St. Peter, and there made the necessary monastic vows in the presence of Pope Zachariah. Wrapt in the fervour of religious } A. D.
zeal, he confided the interests of his youthful } 746:
sons to the care of Pepin; but in such an age of vicissitude and change, all prospective political provisions were futile and vain. The conduct of Pepin served to exemplify this, for no sooner were the children of Carloman placed under his protection, than he submitted them all to the tonsure—thus destroying any future claims which they might be hereafter disposed to assert. Pepin, who inherited much of the energy and ambition of his father, was now placed by the retirement of his brother in the position he so much coveted; and having with the consent of the Austrasian nobles accepted their mayoralty he caused Childeric III. to be declared sovereign, until his own secret designs,

for the final subversion of the Merovingian House, should be more completely ripened and matured. The revolution which had been so long preparing fast approached, and the dawning genius of the Carolingians began to show a sensible ascent above the political horizon.

History, obscured and neglected during the career of Charles Martel, has left such imperfect records of his life that we can form but very vague and indefinite ideas of his political character: the annalists of the day, satisfied with laconically recording his victories, appear seldom to have enquired into the motives of his conduct, or to have scrutinized the policy of his actions; hence, we lose all the advantages of contemporary testimony, and can only form an estimate of his merits as a political ruler, by analyzing the principal events in which he performed a prominent part. A cursory observation of his career might lead to the supposition that Charles was little more than a successful soldier; yet, contrasting the condition of the Frankish kingdoms at the period of his death, with that which existed before his elevation to power, we are unhesitatingly compelled to acknowledge the ability of his government; we feel that despite his faults and imperfections, a mighty impulse had been given by his master hand towards the restoration of public order in the state; that by the penetrating foresight, the quick decision of his military genius, barriers of defence had been erected, which defied the impetuous assault of the Mahometan, and impeded the advance of barbarian conquest from the Rhine; and we, perhaps, not unjustly

ascribe to him, the merit of having been the main instrument in effecting that marked amelioration in the condition and the security of Frankish society, which followed the period occupied by his rule. No monuments of his legislative proceedings, no fragments of his decrees remain extant to give any idea of the method by which he governed the Franks; but, in the absence of such evidence, we may conjecture that after having consulted his leading captains, and obtained their concurrence in his views, he went forth with a body of armed men to publish his laws, and thus intimidate all who threatened to oppose him. His government was essentially military in its character, his authority rested upon the power of the sword, and if any one had enquired of him whether that were the best form of government he could grant the Franks, Charles might have replied as Solon did, when asked if his laws for the Athenians were the best—"Yes, the best they are capable of receiving."

The great stigma which has always more or less tarnished the reputation of this eminent leader, was that spoliation of the church lands which he sanctioned and encouraged, to furnish rewards for the military services of his followers. To a disinterested observer, this offence might have appeared far more venial than it did to the priests, who both, during the life of Charles, and long afterwards, used every means that lay in their power to defame his character and calumniate his memory. Such opprobrious and vindictive reproaches are, however, divested of much of their force, when the circumstances under which the accusa-

tions were made have been honestly and impartially examined. The early apostles of Christianity never aimed at acquiring wealth, or establishing a church richly endowed with temporalities ; their lives were devoted to fulfil a loftier and a purer mission—they laboured for a more exalted reward. The light of divine inspiration had never entirely receded from their view, nor had religion in their hands lost her original and pristine purity. Persecuted and oppressed by the rulers of the earth, contemned and reviled by the scoffer and the unbeliever, the primitive Christians underwent many trials and suffered many afflictions ; their journey was indeed full of perils, and of them, it might be said, with truth, that “ their kingdom was not of this world.” As time, however, progressed, avarice and covetousness entered the church ; and in the same proportion that Christianity increased the number of her converts, did the morality and the humility of her teachers decline. A few centuries sufficed to engender that corruption which subsequent ages have never been able to entirely eradicate ; and, although the conduct of the idolater and the barbarian towards the church, affords some palliation for the unscrupulous avidity shown by her ministry in acquiring temporal power, yet the means which the priesthood employed for their artful purpose were in the highest degree base and reprehensible. Instructed by the nature of their divine mission, gifted with the advantages and the blessings of knowledge, and endowed with far greater intellectual acuteness than the laity to whom their teaching was addressed, the

Christian ministry introduced innumerable superstitious forms into the discipline and services of the church, for the sole purpose of conferring wealth upon their order; and so successful were these deceitful contrivances, in pandering to the prejudices of ignorance, and exciting the passions of fanaticism, that before the commencement of the eighth century the greater proportion of the landed property in Frankish-Gaul had passed into the hands of the ecclesiastical corporation. It must be admitted that no special endowments were ever granted by the governments of the Frankish kingdoms, for the regular maintenance of the church; neither the assemblies of the Champs de Mars, nor the crown, having effected any legal provisions to furnish the necessary support required by the ministers of religion. If, however, such legitimate duties were discredibly neglected by the state, the deficiency was amply compensated by the private munificence of wealthy and benevolent individuals. The converted barbarians, naturally tinctured with those devout superstitions peculiar to uncultivated minds, always paid the highest respect and reverence to the priesthood of the Christian church; and nothing was considered so meritorious by them, as the bequest of worldly riches in the service of religion. Kings and princes vied with each other in this pious but lavish generosity; estates were surrendered for the support of episcopal sees; large tracts of land were bestowed upon the monasteries; and both the ecclesiastical and the monastic foundations were continually receiving the most splendid donations from this affluent

and perennial source. The clergy, however, not content with the legitimate wealth they derived from the munificent offerings of voluntary benevolence, invented a variety of delusive frauds to obtain riches by imposing upon the fears and credulities of the ignorant. Fictitious relics and pretended miracles, prayers for the benefit of the dead, and the expiation of crime by pecuniary gifts, all contributed to fill the coffers of the ecclesiastical treasury with abundance ; but it was from dying persons, especially, that the priests succeeded in obtaining those liberal bequests which rendered the church so opulent ; and to such an extent did this species of pious fraud prevail, that express laws were framed to prevent women from resigning their property to the ecclesiastics. In many instances, the objects which the clergy had in view, when seeking to obtain these treasures for the church, were doubtless of the purest nature, and designed to answer the most charitable purposes of the heart ; yet, it would be an error to suppose that they were universally prompted to perform such actions, by the feelings of a pious benevolence, or the dictates of a genuine philanthropy. However clear might be the stream when gushing from its fountain spring, the waters soon became turbid and polluted in their course ; however holy and blameless might be the original motives of the priest, they soon became coloured by the vices, the lusts, and the depravities of the world through which they were destined to pass. The ministry of the Christian church, exposed to the temptations of sordid gain, had accepted and tasted the forbidden fruit ; the money-

changers had entered the temple ; the altar was profaned and desecrated by worldly interests and worldly passions.

Even from the reign of Clovis the landed possessions of the Gallo-Frankish church had been constantly increasing ; and to such an extent had the desire for territorial aggrandizement prevailed among the ecclesiastics, that when Charles Martel acquired the supreme authority in the state, almost all the cultivated lands were more or less under their controul. The monastery and the church divided the soil, and so frequently did the bishops misapply the treasures, which had been appropriated to supply the stream of charity, that even ecclesiastical councils attempted to restrain the scandalous misdeeds of episcopal administration. Thus, in the council of Braga, the following reproof occurs : " Avarice is the root of all evil, and this guilty thirst seizes even the hearts of bishops. Many of the faithful, from love for Christ and the martyrs, raise basilicas in the parishes of the bishops, and deposit offerings thereon ; but the bishops seize upon them, and turn them to their own use. Thence it follows, that priests are wanting to perform divine service, because they do not receive the fees." All contemporary annalists concur in condemning the conduct of the bishops, whose avarice and rapacity appear to have increased in proportion as the superintendence of their metropolitans was withdrawn, and the influence of the priests diminished. Having successfully defended the estates of the church from the menacing advance of the Saxon and the Mussulman,

Charles Martel very justly required some tributary acknowledgment, for the meritorious services performed by his martial followers ; and as the clergy showed but little inclination to part with their temporal possessions, he proceeded to effect an agrarian distribution of their property by force of arms. The ecclesiastics, highly incensed at what they deemed a sacrilegious violation of their rights, at first resented the oppressive demands of their remorseless ruler, by preaching his eternal perdition ; but as these were periods, when every one was compelled to secure personal safety, by subscribing to the will of the ruling powers, the voice of discontent gradually died away. Pepin le Bref, engaged in ambitious designs to supplant the unhappy Merovingian, who nominally held possession of the throne, by founding a new dynasty in his own person, felt the necessity of obtaining the co-operation of the Frankish hierarchy, before he advanced to the actual violence of revolution ; and knowing how essential the sanction of the church would prove, in confirming his proposed usurpation, he was readily induced to grant the bishops a restitution of their property, as well as a restoration of their original privileges. Hence, the priests, by degrees, forgot the wrongs and injustice to which Charles Martel had compelled them to submit, and perceiving how vain would be all attempts to maintain such imbecile princes as the Merovingians in power, they even condescended to assist Pepin, in laying the foundations of the Second, or the Carolingian dynasty.

The history of civilization in France, from the

commencement of the seventh to the middle of the eighth century, presents but a melancholy picture of decadency and retrogression. Anarchy frequently invaded both the civil and the ecclesiastical society—government, if such a fact could be said to exist, was directed either by chance or force—the superior population became brutalised by sensuality and passion—the inferior sank under the weight of slavery and despair—the priesthood turned from things spiritual to things temporal—episcopacy descended to the lowest depths of degradation and contempt—education became wholly neglected—schools were abandoned—all instruction ceased. Literature was only cultivated here and there by some obscure and solitary recluse—poetry disappeared from the scene—theological learning declined—and even those rude chronicles of passing events, which had hitherto served the purpose of history, no longer found an annalist to continue the humble task. Society appeared paralysed and torpid. No one interested themselves upon public affairs, or political government, unless their own lives and liberties were placed in immediate danger. No one cared whether the laws were respected or disobeyed, whether their ruler was an idiot or a sage. No one cast their eyes beyond the narrow circle which enclosed personal feelings, and individual interests. All ideas of duty became discarded, all respect for right abandoned, and man appeared fast hastening to destroy every moral instinct of his nature, by substituting the sensuality of passion, and the licentiousness of lust, in the place of those nobler

and diviner feelings, which confer security upon him in this life, and happiness in that to come. The intellectual world fast put on the wild appearance of a desert waste, and that full and bounteous stream of knowledge, which had hitherto fertilized and refreshed the human mind, seemed frozen and arrested in its course. Yet this period is, of all others, memorable in the religious history of France; from hence a hundred convents date their origin—the saints upon the calendar double in number—innumerable legends were written, to depict the sufferings of the pilgrim and the trials of the martyr—monasteries were richly endowed, and new churches erected—religious monuments were raised—costly shrines adorned—and scarcely an important personage left the world, without founding a temple to perpetuate his memory to future ages. Many a holy edifice in France points to this period as the epoch of its birth. Then arose the magnificent abbey of St. Denis, enriched by the munificence of Dagobert, and ornamented by the skill of St. Eloi; then, amidst the solitudes of the Limousin, sprang up the noble convent of Solignac; then did St. Vandrille steal from the world, to lay the foundations of that stately pile, the Abbey of Fontanelle; then did many a devout hand rear up those lofty and aspiring towers, which so long remained the marvel and the pride of mediæval architecture—

“Delights of men below and saints above.”

Civilization had assumed a religious type; the heart, finding nothing in the moral world worthy of its affections, turned to the altar and the cross for solace

and for hope. In the sanctity and the beauty of monastic religion, society found that satisfaction, and that happiness, which had elsewhere been sought in vain. Meditating over the sacred pages of the imaginative legend, or gazing upon the costly devices of the sculptured tomb, man, even in this darkened epoch, perhaps, as often approached the true purpose of his being, as in those brighter ages of intellectuality which have bequeathed to the world the highest efforts and the noblest works of human genius ; which have produced a Bolinbroke and a Voltaire, a D'Alembert and a Gibbon. We must not forget that there is a civilization of the heart, as well as that of the mind.

The idea which predominated in Gallo-Frankish society during the Merovingian epoch, was a desire to arrest the career of victorious barbarism, by establishing a new state, in which all races, conquering or conquered, should become blended and amalgamated. To institute a political organization capable of governing this state with regularity, of preserving its territorial consistency, and equal to confer upon it a national unity, was the great task—the Herculean labour of the age. Three institutions successively aspired to perform this arduous and difficult undertaking—the free assemblies of the Champs de Mars, royalty, and the councils of the beneficiary aristocracy. The first and second failed ; the third proved hardly more successful. So long as the Franks pursued their migratory and aboriginal life, amidst the forest tracts of Germany, no form of political government could prove so applicable to their wants, or so available for the

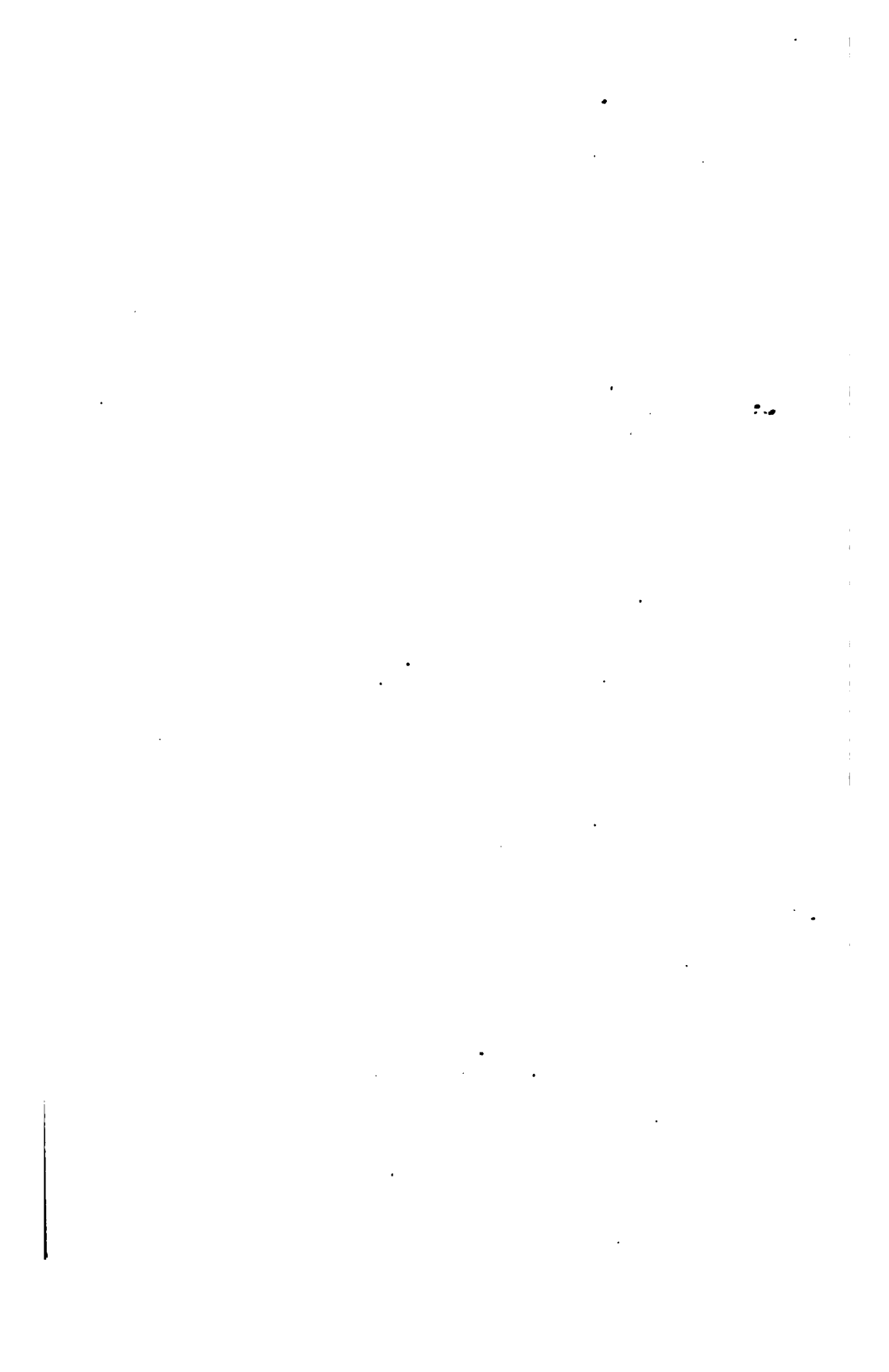
regulation of their movements, as a democratic assemblage of their warlike chiefs, convened at stated periods ; but when the barbarians were transplanted from their native soil, when they had entered the fertile and more civilized provinces of Roman-Gaul, such rude and imperfect institutions, as the free conventions, became but ill adapted to their new position. The very manner in which the invaders settled upon the lands of the conquered territory, tended to render their attendance at the Champs de Mars precarious and uncertain. National interest soon became sacrificed to that of individual aggrandizement—each proprietor being more eager to improve his own estate, than zealous to assist in forming a cohesive and stable government. Each barbarian chief, occupied in establishing his own domain, ceased to aspire to the attainment of a national entirety ; and in proportion as the freemen declined in number, owing to their having fallen from time to time into the ranks of servitude, the national assemblies lost both their authority and importance. Anarchy was too widespread and too universal in the Gallo-Frankish society, to admit the establishment of so delicate a machinery as that of a representative government ; the licentious and lawless freedom of the allodial proprietors, being wholly incompatible with the continuous existence of any institution, resembling the nature of a deliberative assembly. The conventions of the Champs having failed to procure a stable political organization, were at length abandoned. Society was not sufficiently developed to admit of free institutions.

Royalty was equally unsuccessful in its efforts to confer an entirety upon the state, or to build up a permanent centralization of power. Innumerable obstacles arose to obstruct such designs. The increasing imbecility of the Merovingian race—the constant invasions of the Saxon, and the Saracen—the declining influence of the episcopal clergy—the growing independence of the beneficiary proprietors—and the ambitious advances of the Mayors of the Palace, combined to render the monarchical principle, as impotent and ineffective as that of the free assemblies. Nothing but a succession of able rulers, like Clovis or Charlemagne, could have enabled royalty to reduce the discordant elements of the Gallo-Frankish society, into an harmonious and well-regulated state. Assuredly, in the hands of such feeble princes as the Chilperics and the Childeberts, it could effect nothing. Such, indeed, was the case, it stood confessedly unequal to the task; its position speedily became hopeless; its humiliation irreparable. Royalty then shared the fate of the free assemblies; it passed into oblivion; it resigned the substance of power, it retained the shadow of title.

In a society so disorganized and so agitated by the frequent recurrence of anarchical contests for the supreme authority of the state, there remained but a single principal capable of maintaining public order; and this was, the aristocratic principle, or the government of the nation by dividing it into particular districts, each district being governed by a large territorial proprietor, who was in possession of an

adequate military force to ensure its protection. Under this peculiar system of manorial despotism, the rights of property became better established; property itself became more secure. The hereditary principle advanced—that of free election declined. Inequality visibly separated society into different ranks and grades. At the head of this provincial aristocracy of territorial proprietors, were the Mayors of the Palace, officers who led them into the field, interpreted their desires, and fulfilled their commands. Such were Pepin D'Heristal and Pepin le Bref, organs of power, and instruments of action, guided by the will of a powerful territorial aristocracy, but sometimes, as in the case of Charles Martel, permitted to assume despotic authority.

At the close of the Merovingian epoch, the aristocratic principle prevailed. The free assemblies had perished; royalty was but a phantom and a shadow; aristocracy alone remained—it alone predominated victor and survivor of its fallen rivals. As the most insignificant seeds produce the noblest and most majestic trees of the forest, so from the humble benefices of the Merovingians sprang up the germs of that gigantic polity—the Feudal System. Feudalism then originated in the Merovingian epoch; this is its true birth-place—the cradle of its infancy. We shall see its growth for a moment repressed, by the powerful genius of Charlemagne; but, under the feeble rule of his degenerate successors, we shall observe it bursting forth again, destined for a long, a vigorous, and a fruitful maturity.



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